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**Geopolitics as a Traveling Theory:
The Evolution of Geopolitical Imagination in Japan,
1925 - 1945**

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

This work is entirely conducted by the candidate. None of the work has been submitted for a degree at another university.

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Summary

This thesis interrogates how geopolitics as a political theory travels inter-regionally in an effort to expand the field of inquiry of critical geopolitics to non-Western states. As a case study, it examines the impact of German geopolitics on Japan during the second quarter of the last century, with a particular focus on the theory of the state as a living organism. Existing studies of critical geopolitics argue that geographical knowledge oppressed local knowledge by discursively actualizing the divided world when it was disseminated all over the world. However, given that critical geopolitical literature on non-Western countries is scarce, there is limited understanding on how classical geopolitics was interpreted in non-Western contexts. Contrastingly to common assumptions, aiming to fill this knowledge gap, this thesis argues that geopolitical knowledge becomes power in a foreign community only when it fits into the vernacular that is embedded in the local landscape. This thesis highlights the role of cognitive gaps that arise between analytical spaces in the course of the travel. In the gaps, the local mode of power mutates the concept without changing its appearance. Seeing intellectuals as a part of the wider community, this thesis unearths the neglected evolution of a traveling theory by thoroughly clarifying the context of the space of interpretation. Thus, it aspires to examine how spatial difference is manifested in International Relations discourses and why and how knowledge is making the world ostensibly one, despite the absence of consensus and therefore unsynthesizable.

Japan is a country that is said to have become the first non-Western state by importing a number of European political theories. Analysing scholarly articles and discussions on space and knowledge in Japan, this thesis argues that in Japan, geopolitics helped Japanese people to imagine a different shape of the world. This was a borderless world in which the modern states dissolved into regions. Geopolitical theories supported Japanese government's attempt to replace the deteriorating European world order of states with a regionalism called the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. In Japanese geopolitical discussions, its environmental determinism tuned into ecological fatalism. Therefore, at least in the first half of the twentieth century, geopolitics was knowledge that rationalized a localized worldview, but not a particular (European) geopolitical tradition, exposing the diversified political practices in world politics.

The List of Japanese Terms

<i>Basho</i>	Place
<i>(bankoku) Kōhō</i>	Universal law. An early translation for international law in Japan and China
<i>chiseigaku</i>	geopolitics
<i>Daitōa</i>	Greater East Asia
<i>Daitōa Kyōeiken</i>	The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere
<i>dō</i>	Way or path. in Chinese, the pronunciation is ‘tao’. As a Confucian concept, it loosely means ‘nature’, ‘principle’, ‘truth’, and so on
<i>fūdo</i>	Climate
<i>honzen no Sei</i>	The natural disposition given by Heaven
<i>jison jieī</i>	Self-sufficiency of self-defence
<i>kaikoku</i>	Opening the country
<i>kokudo</i>	National land
<i>kokutai</i>	National polity. A synonym of the Emperor family’s rule from the seventh century
<i>kyōchō gaikō</i>	Cooperative diplomacy.
<i>minzoku</i>	Cultural concept of a group of people, as opposed to the biological concept of race (<i>shuzoku</i>).
<i>Nanshinron</i>	The Southern Expansion Doctrine.
<i>Nan-yō</i>	The South.
<i>Nihonjinron</i>	Discussions about the Japanese, a genre of studies on Japanese national and cultural identity.
<i>sakoku</i>	Closing the country. isolationist policy.
<i>Seiyō</i>	The West.
<i>Tōyō</i>	The East.
<i>yi</i>	Barbaric.

Modern Japanese Era Names

Edo (Tokugawa) Period	1603-1868
Meiji Period	1868-1912
Taisho Period	1912-1926
Showa Period	1926-1989
Heisei Period	1989

Introduction: Standing in a Place, Imagining a Space

The adjective ‘abnormal’ is often used to describe Japan in the context of world politics. While some may see this as a mere self-branding or a stereotype, it is in fact widely used not only in scholarly analyses but also in broader geopolitical and geoeconomic discourses. At the same time, Japan is more often than not labelled as a ‘model’ to which the non-Western world should aspire. An interesting consequence of this ambivalent identity of Japan is that it has contributed to the construction of fault lines in world politics. This has been the case at least quite recently when China as another ‘abnormal great power’ (Huang, 2015) has come to attract the attention of Western elites.

To illustrate, in a 2003 speech at the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment of Democracy, then US President George W. Bush claimed that ‘[s]ome skeptics of democracy assert that the traditions of Islam are inhospitable to the representative government. This “cultural condescension”, as Ronald Reagan termed it, has a long history. After the Japanese surrender in 1945, a so-called Japan expert asserted that democracy in that former empire would “never work”’ (National Endowment for Democracy, 2003; see also Dower, 2011: 14). Here, Japan is drawn as the first example to attest the validity of American promotion of democracy. In this way, Japan has acted as a gatekeeper, if not ‘the front office’ (Jackson, 2009), for the West and/or modernity.

Whether Japan is ‘normal’ or not has generated considerable debate in Japanese International Relations (IR). As the debate circles around Japan’s post-war security arrangement and the possibility of its remilitarisation, the focus of the debate has been on whether Japan’s behaviour is abnormal. In contrast to a realist perspective, which is likely to make a black-or-white judgement, constructivists tend to avoid judging, and argue that the standard of abnormality is an (inter-subjective) social construction (cf. Hook et al. 2005; Hagström, 2015). Despite the disagreement, both perspectives espouse the premise that the scientific concept of ‘the state’ is understood with the same meaning in any spatio-temporal context. In other words, in asking whether a behaviour is abnormal or not for *the* state, what has been missing is an inquiry into whether the geographical concept means essentially the same everywhere in the world. Here, a glaring but neglected fact behind the debate is that Japan was the first non-

Western example of the Westphalian modern state. This ‘first’ evidently has contributed to the discourse of abnormality in reference to the implicit assumption of the European experience as standard. However, in our diversified world today, as evidenced in the rising discourse of ‘abnormal’ China, the effect of this ‘first’ has been diminished while attention paid to ‘exceptions’ to the Westphalian state increases ever more (cf. Krasner, 1995). Consequently, it perhaps becomes more pertinent to conceive abnormality as *difference*. In this context, John Agnew (2017: 13) has presented an intriguing proposition: the ‘abnormal’ Japan, together with the ‘exceptional’ United States, ‘should be seen as important guides to what they bring to global society’. What he proposes is the necessity to investigate ‘the broad historical dynamics of statehood, comparing the European experience with that of the rest of the world’. Arguing for the contingency of statehood, he points out that ‘writing about “the” state in the abstract’ in reference to mostly European experiences misses the historical and geographical contingencies of every ‘state’. Following him, then, Japan can be analysed as *a* state, rather than *the* state, thus being liberated from the role of a gatekeeper.

In 2003, David Kang claims that ‘the state’, as a concept that emerged out of European experiences, is ill-equipped to explain other parts of the world (see also Buzan and Lawson, 2015: 378). Nonetheless, the ways in which the concept is insufficient and therefore different according to context are still a significantly under-cultivated area of study. Furthermore, as Stuart Elden (2013) has stated, even the concept of territory, which defines the state’s bounded land, has historically been little investigated even within Europe, because its meaning is considered to be self-evident, despite the fact that the concept can be morphed into different meanings under various contexts. Drawing on these research, there is, then, plenty of reason to re-examine the concept of ‘the state’.

In addition, as the field of IR, in its post-Western focus, pivots upon ways to deal with differences, the localisation of concepts is increasingly becoming an important agenda. IR scholars are urged ‘to develop concepts ... from non-Western contexts *on their own terms* and to apply them ... to other contexts’ (Acharya, 2014, emphasis in original). As Edward Said reminds us, however, the travelling of theory is nothing new, and has been a ‘fact of life and a usefully enabling condition of activity’ (Said, 1982: 196). In the course of travel, concepts that eventually constitute a theory must undergo mutation. It is therefore essential to study existing cases of localisation in

order to gain a more fruitful understanding of how knowledge is systematically localised. Here, two things need to be clarified: first, how the meaning of a concept has evolved as it travels globally; and second, what such transformation has done to the globalising world. It is this specific field of inquiry of the globalisation of knowledge to which this thesis aims to contribute.

Treating a state literally as a state means examining thoroughly its particular spatio-temporal context and its language as a system of mean conversion. It has been said for decades that the social science, followed by IR studies, has undergone a linguistic turn. In doing so, international studies have taken a historiographical turn (Armitage, 2004, 2012; Buzan and Hansen, 2009; Devetak, 2015; Buzan and Lawson, 2015). However, while the spatial turn has gone on in the social science for decades (cf. Jessop et al., 2008), it has only just begun in IR (Armitage, 2012; Starr, 2013). In political geography, by contrast, it has been argued that spatiality is an indispensable consideration in any analysis of knowledge consumption and production (Livingstone, 2005; Agnew, 2007, 2011). Yet, the task is still largely undone in both political geography and IR to consider the political economy of spaces of interpretation, particularly in the Western/non-Western nexus.

This focus on the space of interpretation opens up a number of new questions, as knowledge can be morphed both tactically and unwittingly when it travels across linguistic and geographical borders. The distance of travel is not only material, but intellectual; not just spatial, but also temporal. Particularly, this thesis claims the importance of a cognitive gap that has unfortunately gone largely unrecognised. In the gap, unknown quality of foreign knowledge is comprehended essentially sensory and intuitively. Accordingly, the difference of interpretations gets sucked between analytical spaces. Because of this ‘less-than-conscious’ (Solomon and Steele, 2016: 3) quality of knowledge production, the space of interpretation has to be envisaged not as a space for intellectuals but one that is embedded in a wider geographical community.

My intention is not to merely emphasising difference and plurality, but consider the duality of the global. Why and how is knowledge making the world apparently as one, despite the difference? Even if the interpretations vary, there must still exist a ‘sameness’ that actualises hegemonic power, which wraps the different interpretations together in the name of ‘the universal’. David Armitage (2012: 30) argues that the different conditions through which text travels has generated ‘dissimilitude out of

similarity'. The concept of *the* state became universal because it was understood as *a* state in respective spaces. Modern Japan's import of the Westphalian state is one of the 'most typical case[s]' (Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2009: 716) of such transformation, although it is mostly referred to as a successful example. However, even a brief observation would indicate that the import was not substantial but rather nominal. For in the process of import, an already established indigenous idea played a fundamental but largely hidden role. Not sharing the European historical experiences that had forged the concept, the Japanese people interpreted the concept in their own context by replacing it with an indigenous and ubiquitous term that has its own history, rather than by coining a new term. This process is not just a conscious replacement, but it is accompanied by an unconscious filtering of logic in the local language. Clearly, this mutation is not a product of a single structure, but should be better understood as a highly contingent event that happened at the intersection of the two. This has not been problematised to date, because both Western scholars *and* the indigenous scholars have not paid adequate attention to the issue of language and space until quite recently (Nakamura, 1971). By treating the space(s) of politics and its role seriously, the present thesis aims to interrogate global knowledge (re-)creation by using Japan as an example.

1. Research Questions in Critical Geopolitics

This thesis addresses a couple of questions by situating them in the literature of critical geopolitics, a sub-discipline of political geography. The first is theoretical: how does a geopolitical thought travel long distance and contribute to processes of political spatialisation in the recipient country? The second is empirical: how did Japanese people form their geopolitical imagination(s) by importing theories of classical European geopolitics in the first half of the twentieth century? A geopolitical concept created in a particular space conveys a specific imagination with the space's native geography and history as background. When it travels to a foreign space, what kind of image can it project onto the minds of the people at the destination? With a distance, to say the least, the image conveyed would be different from the original. The gap had to be considerably wide when, in the early twentieth century, only very few people could have a chance to travel outside of their country.

The main contribution that this thesis makes is in expanding the scope of critical geopolitical investigation towards the non-Western world. In addition, as its by-

product, it offers an analytical framework for analysing how theory travels inter-regionally. This research began originally with an empirical puzzle of mine on the question of Japan's volatile identity. I selected critical geopolitics as the field of inquiry because it problematises geographical knowledge as power, particularly in terms of the boundary-making practices of the Great Powers. As the research advanced, however, the theoretical inquiry came to occupy a greater part of the project. This was because of an absence of a theoretical debate in not only critical geopolitics but also in international studies in general, on how political theory travels. In search of a proper theoretical underpinning, the scope of inquiry has been expanded outside of not only disciplinary but also regional and linguistic confinements. Some might wonder if this is a study of intellectual history where the case is classical geopolitics, or that of critical geopolitics with Japan as a case relying on a method of intellectual history. This research has been rather question-driven, and I believe that the most important contribution of this study is to critical geopolitics, since the analytical framework presented in this thesis was developed to critically analyse none other than geopolitical theories.

The conclusion of this thesis is as follows: Geopolitical knowledge becomes power in a foreign community only when it fits into the vernacular, which defines the relation of geography and politics developed in the community according to its collective experiences. In order to be effective as power, knowledge has to be imagined in a particular way. Japan in the twentieth century did not follow what John Agnew (2003) calls the modern geopolitical imagination disseminated from Europe despite the importation of geopolitical thought. Japanese geopolitics envisaged the transformation of world order differently from the West. They imagined the state not as a bounded space, but precisely as an *unbounded* space. Although I partly agree with the critical geopolitical statement that geographical knowledge is power (Ó Tuathail, 1996b), it does not necessarily mean that the expansion of geopolitical knowledge is the expansion of European power *per se*. Rather, how power is imagined in each space is an open question.

As Adriana Cavarero (2002) has pointed out, political theory is fundamentally oxymoronic; it is a putatively universal theory supported by local practices. Once it is implanted into a foreign space, its practices have to be replaced by local ones, inflecting the theory itself in unforeseeable ways. This thesis examines the role of epistemological difference in global knowledge production, which is rarely discussed.

Despite the negligence, the difference contributed to globalisation nonetheless. Intellectual globalisation is therefore not necessarily a process of integration by a particular tradition, but a more complex aggregation of different intellectual traditions. It is argued that globalising knowledge is difficult to be fully synthesised despite the so-called common quality. If the main concern of critical geopolitics is ‘exposing the ground of knowledge production’ (Power and Campbell, 2010; see also Dodds et al., 2013: 7), this thesis can make a pertinent contribution to the debate.

Geopolitics and Critical Geopolitics

Classical geopolitics is argued to have originated through the work of Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), a German geographer in the late nineteenth century.¹ During the interwar period, classical geopolitics developed in Germany and was said to have prospered during the Nazi period.² At the same time, similar theories were developed both in the United Kingdom and the United States (Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Dodds et al., 2013), making this worldwide phenomenon. In the late 1920s, Japanese scholars imported these theories of geopolitics, particularly the German version, in order to theorise the expansionist policy of the Empire, known as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In this development, Japan was the sole non-Western³ state in which geopolitics enjoyed high academic *and* public popularity (Watanabe, 1942; Iizuka, 1975 [1942-43]; Takagi, 2009).

To date, however, geopolitics has been more a politically useful term than an academic field of study, as it has repeatedly gained popular support in the time of uncertainty everywhere in the world. This means that what geopolitical theory actually is has rarely been questioned. The term almost disappeared after the Second World War because geographers regretted their contributions to the war discourse, or because the term evoked intellectual closeness to Nazism. Only occasionally was geopolitics referred to as a means to stabilise the provisional world political map. According to Ó Tuathail (1996b), in the Anglo-American world, Henry Kissinger in the 1970s evoked the term as ‘a synonym for balance-of-power politics’. Under the Reagan

¹ The term ‘geopolitics’ was coined by the Swedish political scientist Rudolph Kjellén.

² Murphy (1997) however contends that Weimar Germany, more than Nazi Germany, was responsible.

³ This thesis uses the term ‘the West’ not to denote primordial geographical and intellectual communities, but as a conventional term in order to consider different geographical traditions, whose membership are however ephemeral.

administration, it came to partake a more ideological meaning, and its usage increased not only among intellectuals but also in the mass media (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 58).⁴

Critical geopolitics emerged as a response to the rapid transformation of world politics in the 1980s and 1990s, which saw the end of the Cold War (cf. Power and Campbell, 2010; Moisio, 2015). It was a search for an alternative discourse of world politics. Questioning the powerful ambiguity of the term, what critical geopolitics problematised was the fundamental ‘epistemological principles’ governing white male elites that produce geopolitical discourses (Ó Tuathail, 1994: 319, 1996b). Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992: 192) re-conceptualise classical geopolitics as ‘a discursive practice by intellectuals of statecraft spatializ[ing] international politics in such a way to represent a “world” characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas’. In his seminal work, Ó Tuathail (1996b, 15) argues that geopolitics is ‘a convenient fiction’ of a ‘set of practices within the civil societies of the Great Powers that sought to explain the meaning of the new global conditions of space, power, technology’. It is an ensemble of heterogeneous efforts that nevertheless shared common traditions. These traditions are: first, that the acts of ‘geo-writing’ is ‘invariably imperialist’; second, that their view is presupposed by Social Darwinism, which underwrites white supremacist assumptions; and finally, that the theories have developed a ‘distinctive way of approaching international politics’ grounded in ‘Cartesian perspectivalism’, which has provided them with a geographical gaze that sees the reality of the world as ‘out there’ (ibid.: 22-23). For these traditions, the world is composed of ‘a viewing subject’ and a ‘viewed object’ (ibid.: 29). Its gaze ‘degeographicalize[s] and depoliticize[s] the study of international politics’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 53, 1996a, 2010b).

Thus, critical geopolitics defines geopolitics ‘as the practice of spatialization within the statecraft’ (Guzzini, 2012: 19) that has dominated world politics, rather than seeing it as a substantial theory. For scholars of critical geopolitics, classical geopolitics represents an overwhelmingly Eurocentric view that is ‘informed by racial and environmental determinism’ (Dodds et al., 2013: 3) and significantly reduces the messy reality of the world. Such argument aspires to rectify the ‘sectoral narrowness’ (Buzan and Little, 2001) of studies of international politics, whose origin can be traced

⁴ In Japan, for example, a book titled *Aku no Ronri: Chiseigaku towa Nanika* (A Theory of Evil: What is Geopolitics?) was published in 1977 (Kuramae, 1977), and became bestseller.

back to classical geopolitics (Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Ashworth, 2014; Buzan and Lawson, 2015). In short, critical geopolitics problematises the politics of space by the Great Powers.

Japan and Geopolitics

Inspired by this argument, my aim is to expand the scope of investigation of critical geopolitics to non-Western states by examining the wartime discourse of Japanese geopolitics. For the tradition of geopolitics, wartime Japan would be an ambivalent destination for a few reasons. First, it did not share its intellectual tradition with Europe. Second, it is a non-white country located in the Far East. Third and therefore, it is viewed as an object for Europe, rather than an ‘observing subject’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 23). Major classical geopoliticians—Ratzel, Rudolph Kjellén (1864-1922), and Karl Haushofer (1869-1946)—analysed Japan by stressing its abnormality from Europe (cf. Kjellén, 1918; Haushofer, 1941, 1942a, 1942b; Tanaka, 1996; Marklund, 2014). Analysed in such a discriminatory way,⁵ it was impossible for Japan to become an observing subject that actively employs geopolitics. In addition, the timing of the import has to be questioned. While Japan fought the Second World War against Anglo-America, it became part of ‘Western Civilisation’ (Jackson, 2006) afterwards, ultimately stabilising the US-led political map. Then it was violence, not power and knowledge (Arendt, 1970), that created the boundary. Obviously, they are contradictory to the assertion of critical geopolitics.

A broader popular narrative similarly posits that Japan entered into European international relations rather forcefully but at the same time willingly (cf. Suzuki, 2011). It posits that Japan was ‘forced’ to open up by the United States through Commodore Perry’s black ships in the mid-nineteenth century. After the opening, however, it enterprisingly assimilated almost every piece of European knowledge in an effort to render itself not only the modern nation-state but also one of the Great Powers. Thus, the conventional narrative of modern Japan is ambivalent when it is reconsidered in relation to power and knowledge. This contradiction does not explain, but rather confuses, how Japan overcame the racial and geographical reality. If the power of geographical knowledge is that can be imposed as critical geographers argue,

⁵ While Ratzel and Kjellén obviously had a racially biased view towards the Japanese, Haushofer actually rather admired the Japanese race. This point will be further discussed in chapter 5.

employing the theory for coloured races has to mean obeying the domination. The fluctuation is likely to lead to a conclusion that Japan is an abnormal state. On the other hand, if the discrimination is so easy to overcome by simply imitating political practice, the existence of rigid Eurocentric world politics *per se* has to be doubted. By contrast, the rarely discussed fact is that Japan tried to destabilise the imperialist European world order by fighting the Second World War, an act that tends to be treated as a mere wartime militarist propaganda to mask its own imperialism. However, geopolitics, which supported this self-claimed rebellious effort against European imperialism, was very popular among people. In this context, it was the defeat that made Japan ultimately obey the Western power by *abandoning* its own geopolitics. Thus, Japan's example possibly dismantles the critical geopolitics' view of knowledge as a power, which rather seemed to endorse material power (i.e. violence).

Here, the key to understand this contradiction is in the spaces of politics in which a putatively analogous object is understood differently. Critical geopolitics on the other hand claims plural geopolitical traditions (Dodds and Sidaway, 1994; Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Atkinson and Dodds, 2000). However, this remark has been somewhat obscured as critical geopolitics has confined its inquiry largely within the United States and Europe (Atkinson and Dodds, 2000; Dodds, 2001; Hepple, 2001; Ó Tuathail, 2010a; Dodds et.al, 2013). Consequently, an 'inability of critical geopolitics' to expand its scope of investigations to outside of the West has been acknowledged (Dittmer, 2015; cf. Thrift, 2000; Hepple, 2001; Kelly, 2006). Some notable attempts have been made to remediate this concern (e.g. Slater, 1993, 1994; Sidaway, 1997; Megoran, 2006; Sharp, 2011; Ó Tuathail, 2010a, 2011), but the effort has been far from enough. If Japan's contradiction is addressed to affirm the plurality of geopolitics, this limitation of critical geopolitics can also be overcome to a certain extent.

This irreconcilability of Japanese geopolitics is a product of double negligence. First, it has been forgotten by Japanese scholars themselves, and second, it is unrecognised by Western scholars. To date, studies on Japanese geopolitics have been surprisingly underdeveloped in Anglophone academia and in Japan. A laudable exception is the pioneering work of Takeuchi Keiichi⁶ (1974, 1986, 2000), and a comparative account done by Spang (2001, 2006) focusing on the relation of Japanese

⁶ For Japanese names, this thesis follows the Japanese custom of mentioning the family name first.

and German geopolitics. Since most of the existing studies put too much emphasis on the reflection of Imperial Japan's wartime mistake and accordingly the political linkage between geopoliticians and the government, what Japanese geopolitics actually was in comparison to European geopolitics has been only scarcely addressed (e.g. Fukushima, 1997; Hisatake, 1999, 2000; Sato, 2005; Shibata, 2006). As they stress Japan's imperialist aspect, it has been assumed that ideologically Japan followed the steps of European imperialism. By contrast, recent contributions within IR have suggested that wartime Japan actually had a different worldview from the West, and have devised an IR theory of Japan's own variety, which carry implications to today's plural world order (Jones, 2002; Ong, 2004; Inoguchi, 2007; Shimizu et al. 2008; Shimizu, 2015).

Clarifying how the theory was mutated to gain different meanings in different spaces and why it has been ignored to date is therefore of as much importance to post-Western IR as it is to critical geopolitics. For sure, as Buzan (2016) has stated, the 'so-called national schools of IR', notably Japan's Kyoto School which supported the expansionist policy, risk falling into an 'inward-looking thinking'. On the other hand, however, this inquiry has the potential to reinvigorate the discussion for alternative approaches beyond the dichotomy of the West and the non-West. Jo Sharp (2011: 297) has claimed that critical geopolitical approaches can be strengthened by interrogating the neglected 'non-Western perceptions to current geopolitics and nature of fear'. However, my point, though sympathetic to hers, is that as Japan's perception falls into a cognitive gap between analytical spaces, it has been misrecognised, neglected, or possibly forgotten (rather than suppressed) by not only the West but also the Japanese. While this forgetting seemingly enhances critical geopolitics' assertion of knowledge as power, the fact that the state, located in the historical liminal space between the West and the rest, is treated as exception has also possibly impeded the expansion of its scope to the non-Western world. That is, it is a missing link in understanding knowledge and power in world politics. If this is the case, excavating this particular 'forgotten' geopolitics can help clarify the complex deployment of power-knowledge relations in world politics.

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In order to explicate what Japanese geopolitics was, however, the obscurity of geopolitics has to be first spelled out. Indeed, it is rather this opacity of critical geopolitics than that of classical geopolitics that expunges plurality, as different interpretations are neglected in cognitive gaps generated as theory travels. The oversight of geopolitical plurality is a theoretical corollary of critical geopolitics, in which epistemic difference is not taken into consideration. The classical geopolitics against which critical geographers argue is not classical geopolitics *per se* but the interpretations of a specific American geopolitical imagination as it aimed to oppose an American geopolitical discourse. In other words, geopolitics seen in the debate within critical geopolitics is one that is understood by a particular epistemic tradition, namely that of the contemporary United States, as Ó Tuathail (1996b: 114) candidly confirms. Nonetheless, it is equally frequently mentioned that classical geopolitics itself is a theory of imperialism and white supremacism (e.g. Dodds et al., 2013). This tendency obscures subjectivity as an effect of discourse, but it possibly creates an arbitrary subject of knowledge. This automatically requires an analyst to state which disciplinary strategy a particular subject is subject to (Alcoff, 2000). Since critical geopolitics assumes that the geopolitical imagination of the strong is followed by the weaker, it automatically posits that appropriation of knowledge accompanies epistemic transformation. Bluntly put, in their arguments, while the European epistemic tradition is static, other traditions and therefore subjectivities are highly malleable. Accordingly, the argument possibly but unwittingly articulates a consolidated but hollow subject paradoxically asserting European intellectual superiority to the rest.

Anyhow, assuming an epistemic transformation with no concrete proof is too rough as an argument. By contrast, this thesis evidences that in the case of Japan, geopolitical theory was reframed in the course of import, and the locus of power was displaced to assist an apparently racially discriminatory theory, only to be supported by that exact discriminated race. That is, the power of the knowledge of geopolitical theories, being read differently especially in relation to space, allowed the Japanese to establish their particular subjectivity and geopolitical imagination, enabling them to be subject to their own law. Nonetheless, Japanese geopolitics has been misrecognised to date as it has been seen from almost only one standpoint of 'Western' academic tradition and

its understanding of power, which includes today's Japanese scholars at least since the end of the Second World War. There is only, then, one single analytical space.

With 'standpoint' I do not mean a 'perspective', but a socio-historical condition that a particular context provides for a subject (see Mannheim, 1985: 79-81; Maruyama, 1978), in which different perspectives and 'isms' coexist. As Japanese geopolitics has been analysed from particularly a Western point of view, the polymorphous nature of knowledge and power that the ever-changing standpoints provide has not been captured. In order to unearth the complexity, as Aydin (2007: 3) argues, anti-Western ideas should be examined in its own right and not as reactions or struggles against the West. Re-constructing a neglected socio-historical standpoint is necessary to pin down this double negligence. Recognising this multiplicity of analytical space is more crucial in geopolitics than other political theories because geopolitics is a theory that makes people aware of the importance of spaces of politics in their perception. Rather than 'de-constructing' a particular analytical space in the way critical geopoliticians do, therefore, this thesis wants to see each space as 'a particular, unique point' of the intersection of 'all those networks of social relations and movements and communications' (Massey, 1993: 66). At the intersection, what is highlighted is the important role of apparent 'self-centred' imagination projected from each standpoint.

The theoretical shortage of critical geopolitics that overlooks this multiplicity is what Jef Huysmans (2002) calls a 'normative dilemma'. He argues that social constructivist authors, embracing a politicised assumption in mind, 'write or speak about security when the security knowledge risks the production of what one tries to avoid, what one criticizes'. Simon Dalby (2010: 280) asserts that, contrary to the 'strategic ambition of imperial geopolitics', critical geopolitics is a 'tactical form of knowledge' that demonstrates the geopolitical tradition as a social construction. However, as it emphasises the construction of hegemony, it unwittingly shoves the actual diversity of practice aside. By contrast, Neil Smith (2000: 368) contends that, by relying on a poststructuralism that could actually tempt 'a reformed positivism', critical geopolitics 'does not resolve the problem of how to talk about reality but potentially compounds it'. In this respect, the distinction between tactics and strategy is dangerous, for both could equally construct a specific meaning and lead to a dilemma. Relying on a deconstructive method (cf. Dodds and Sidaway, 1994;

Hyndman, 2010), as Martin Müller states (2013: 53), critical geopolitics reapply ‘the very form of meaning-construction that is deconstructed’. This can lead critical geopolitics to the very self-righteousness that it accuses of American geopolitics.

In an effort to restore this neglected multiplicity, the present thesis demonstrates how and why geopolitics was modified from the original in Japan by way of considering how and why it has been neglected to date. Its aim is therefore not to identify the real Japanese geopolitics but to excavate one dimension of the ever-changing polymorphous thought called ‘geopolitics’ at a particular space-time intersection (cf. Wusten and Dijkink, 2002; Dijkink, 2004). This is an investigation of how spatial difference is manifested in international relations discourse particularly in the process of subjectification in knowledge production. The question here is *whose* geopolitics in which *context*, rather than which geopolitics (Guzzini, 2012: 18). The mutation of geopolitics enabled wartime Japanese scholars to justify a particular way of organising space that was fundamentally different from the Western (American) way. In the course of this appropriation, the original practice that supported the theory was abandoned in the space of interpretation by the interpreting subject. By reframing the theory in accordance with their own epistemic practice, Japanese geopoliticians envisaged that world history as well as the distribution of space on the globe was changing into what they believed to be just.

Whilst critical geopolitics denounces the powerful boundary-making practice of the West, it does not question how and why only Japan, amongst other non-Western states, is easily posited to have transgressed the discursive threshold. This unwittingly contributes to the discourse of Japan as an abnormal state, as it sees Japan as a deviant of *the state*. Treating Japan as *a state*, this thesis instead argues that Japan fought against the West not because it followed the European imperialistic model of organising the world by learning geopolitics, but it did so in its own reading of geopolitics. This counterargument against European geopolitics insists that the any boundaries, including national borders, were a social construction. That is, it did not transgress the discursive boundary, but for Japan, such boundary simply did not exist. Yet it was not because Japan was intellectually progressive, anticipating structuralism or even poststructuralism; rather, the interpretation was according to their indigenous intellectual tradition. In Japan, therefore, the knowledge supposedly originated from Europe was re-situated into its own tradition, allowing Japan to imagine a different world.

In arguing for plural geopolitical traditions, critical geopolitics ends up assuming that there are only two varieties: classical and the alternative, both of which Japanese geopolitics does not fit into. This exclusion arises because its concept of discourse privileges knowledge to its author (Müller, 2008: 325). As far as critical geopolitics is concerned, only the Western geopolitical ‘vision’ and ‘imagination’ are to be problematised (see also Agnew, 2013). This particular practice has to exist exactly in order for it to be refuted. However, the question remains open whether turning ‘geopolitical vision against itself is possible, or even meaningful’ (Hughes, 2013: 75). By contrast, this thesis claims that all geopolitics and their visions are rather different than antithetic.

Another ‘Critical’ Geopolitics?

Japanese geopolitics’ attempt to turn geopolitical vision against Europe was motivated by an aspiration to overcome the similar dilemma to critical geopolitics also contained in Japanese history. Due to Japan’s complex position in world politics as an imperial power on the one hand, and a newly-rising non-Western power on the other, two major standpoints collaterally exist in modern Japanese history. Accordingly, researchers tend to find opposing philosophical implications. When Japan is seen as the former, as Agnew (2003) claims, it is understood as the most assertive follower of Western political practice by becoming the first non-Western modern state. From this point of view, the application of geopolitics by Japanese scholars during the War was a vindication of the evolving Western hegemony in world politics (Agnew, 2003). It argues that Japan learned the ‘general grammar’ (Guzzini, 2012: 15) of international politics. Needless to say, the discourse of abnormality arises when the behaviour of the state seemingly violates the grammar.

By contrast, when the latter position is emphasised, a converse connotation comes to the fore, this time unearthing the fallacy of the Eurocentric world order. For this position, Japan is the advance party of non-Western modernity as it emphasises uniqueness of the state rather than its abnormality. It should be noted that the difference of the two cannot be explained as a confrontation of regressive view and a progressive view. These two views occasionally become closer as well as far apart. Japan imported geopolitical theory when Japan’s intellectual climate came to be rebellious against the West after long intellectual obedience and the consecutive social

malaise that caused by the rapid assimilation of foreign knowledge of more than a half century. This particular tide of public opinion was developed later into an intellectual movement known as the debate on 'overcoming modernity' (Nishitani et al., 1979[1942]), with modernity being equated with the West. At this particular intersection, the latter view was perceived as more progressive, supported by many liberal thinkers. Accordingly, in search for an alternative, Japanese geopolitics became something similar to today's critical geopolitics as it tried to fault the reductionist world map depicted by Europeans. Through this accusation, Japanese geopolitics argued for a regional world order where state boundaries, being an ideological construct given by the West, had to be erased. For the Japanese geopoliticians, it was a 'counter-hegemonic struggle' that opposed the rule 'from above' (Routledge, 2006: 233). In other words, although they stressed difference, it was only in contrast to the West, which means that in their worldview there were only the West and the non-West.

Thus, these two views contain in each a normative dilemma. In the former, sharing a 'view from nowhere' (Agnew, 2003: 15) with the West, the Japanese discourse has to enhance the Western discourse. By contrast, in the latter standpoint, the Japanese claims a uniquely 'Japanese point of view' (Komaki, 1942), and must oppose Western discourse. What is important is that the former standpoint requires forgetting the latter and *vice versa*. As this thesis demonstrates, Japanese geographers in the first half of the twentieth century criticised national identity as a social construction and as exclusive in an effort to present a more inclusive identity, in a similar manner to today's critical geopolitics. Their view was however highly geopolitical as well as counter-hegemonic, rather than 'anti-geopolitical' (Ó Tuathail, 1996a; Routledge, 1998; Dowler and Sharp, 2001: 167). Hence, it is possible to say that Japanese geopolitics questions the plausibility of the critical perspective.

Critical geopolitics and wartime Japanese geopolitics share the dilemma because, as they focus on the comparison of the self and other, the two views accordingly but automatically looked for *the* standard. The natural consequence of this procedure is that it ends up to judge whether the current standard (of the self, in most cases) is true or false however leaving behind the interrogation of what more substantial difference among multiple actors is. It is not to argue that the approach of critical geopolitics was wrong. On the contrary, whilst acknowledging the necessity of launching the enterprise in that way, the exact premise must be thoroughly re-examined in order to proceed to the next step. To avoid the dilemma, a theoretical discussion in reference

to concrete empirical evidence is needed. Opposing the Western discourse, Japanese scholars believed that the alternative discourse they presented must be supported by another non-white people. The irony was that as they argued for *the* alternative by emphasising the fallacy of the current order, the alternative automatically became the truth for them.

Hence, this thesis questions an unexamined proposition in critical geopolitics: Classical geopolitics disseminated Western spatialisation practices to the rest of the world. It argues for geopolitics as knowledge that rationalises a localised worldview, but not one that rationalises a particular geopolitical tradition. In doing so, it analyses Japan as a state but not as an exception of the state. It claims that the expansion of the geopolitical theory contributed to an exposure of diversified, rather than homogenised, spatialisation practices in world politics, thus inducing conflict. At least in the first half of the previous century, therefore, there existed multiple cognisance of the world. Not all people conceived of the earth as a sphere occupied by states confined in territories, despite the dissemination of this very idea of Westphalian sovereignty. What this thesis does is to take the role of the space of politics seriously in order to question a common sense in international politics studies in general and in critical geopolitics in particular.

2. Methodology

Proposing an alternative to the current order does not work in itself because, as Bialasiewicz et al. (2007: 406, emphasis in original) argued, in the discursive production of imaginative geographies, '*performativity* rather than construction' is 'the better theoretical assumption'. Discourse cannot be constructed intentionally, but only performed. How it performs is different in each space. We need to examine 'how meanings are made and disseminated' (Ringmar, 2016: 101) in each space, rather than how discourse is constructed. At the same time, however, the respective spaces have to be considered in relation and not in isolation. The question for the present study is how a theory, a product of a particular epistemic tradition, is being read in a different tradition. What this thesis wants to analyse is a condition of possibility *per se*, presented by a particular intersection of theory and space. This condition can be rightly observed only by thoroughly re-constructing the context in which the intersection is situated. Unlike the conventional historical study, therefore, its focus is on intersections, not on a lineage of development.

Inter-Regional Conceptual Analysis

To this end, this thesis calls for an inter-regional conceptual analysis. It is inter-regional, not inter-cultural, because its focus is on how space makes difference. Following Patrick Jackson (2009: 658), the thesis aims to provide a ‘systematic demonstration of what one gets, empirically, if one apprehends the world with a given sensibility’. It is a ‘disciplined effort to envision what the world would look like if explained and understood according to some ideal-typically elaborated set of value-commitments’. It adopts a comparative approach, but not in an ordinary sense. Huysmans (2002) proposes a strategy to use dilemma as an entry point of research, and then to take ‘a split research strategy that oscillates between a representational and performative understanding of language’. In this strategy, the first research question becomes ‘a heuristic one of how to understand what is happening’. ‘What is to be done?’ is the second question, which however does not mean it is secondary. Huysmans argues that the premise of conceptual analysis is that ‘we know more or less what it [security] means when we use it’. Its purpose is not to redefine the concept, but to ‘formulat[e] a common denominator’ (Huysmans, 1998: 230-231) by identifying the diverse range of usage. For this formulation, critical theory in international politics needs to be proceeded in a historical mode (Devetak, 2014), and not in an explanatory or philosophical mode, which tends to assume a conclusion from the beginning. It is, in other words, approached from within (Jenco, 2007). ‘A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of words’ (Wittgenstein in Norval, 2006: 233). By examining the variety of usage, the ‘self-identical subject’ that specifies the disciplinary strategies (Alcoff, 2000) of classical geopolitics in critical geopolitics has to be dissolved into multiple subjects (Müller, 2008: 322).

For the purpose of such an analysis, this thesis develops an analytical framework by relying on the recently growing literature of assemblage thinking (cf. Collier and Ong, 2005; Ong, 2007; Marcus and Saka, 2006; Anderson et al., 2012; Allen, 2011, 2012; Acuto and Curtis., 2013; Sassen, 2013; Dittmer 2013; Grossburg, 2014). Marcus and Saka (2006) define assemblage as ‘a topological concept that designates the actualisations of the virtual causes or causal processes that are immanent in an open system of intensities that is under the influence of the force that is external to it’. It observes ‘always-emergent conditions’ at the intersection of two open systems. I

employ it because it liberates me from claiming a particular theoretical stance to the utmost extent, since it treats theory and empirics in the same arena. This point is crucial because the present study cuts across plural social structures and problematises epistemic differences that understand an allegedly identical theory differently.

Here I do not want to consider the term assemblages as what belongs to a particular intellectual tradition but as a mode of thought seen in some other regions including Japan. In Japan, the localisation of knowledge has been a subject of study since the beginning of the twentieth century, due to its history of incessant importations of foreign ideas such as from China back in the seventh century (Yoshino 1927; Tsuda, 1938; Maruyama, 1949, 1952). Space has been an essential element for this intellectual inquiry (Nishida, 1911, 1926, 1927). Among them, Maruyama Masao developed the concept of *basso ostinato* driven by this conundrum (Maruyama, 1972, 1976b, 1979, 1984, 1985, 1988). This term denotes a substratum underlying human thought, implying the ‘thingness’ around which assemblages are formed. It is in constant flux as it is socio-historically constructed in a geographical community, but is experienced by people as a relatively stable yet intangible intellectual framework. By developing the concept through Karl Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge, Maruyama tried to identify subtle mutations largely exerted unconsciously on any imported ideas. Drawing on Rodney Nelson (1992), this thesis employs this concept as a heuristic device to detect a particular way of converting travelling ideas in a community, and identifies the role of a cognitive gap that facilitates the process of mutation. Using abductive analysis as a pragmatic research strategy (Friedrichs and Kratochwil, 2000), this study follows Barry Buzan and Richard Little (2001: 34) and analyses ‘different stories about IR’ in ‘parallel’ and not ‘in opposition to each other’ in order to know what is going on both regionally and globally’ (see also Maruyama, 1960).

Assemblages thinking enables us not to label thoughts with words like ‘progressive’, ‘regressive’, ‘post-’, or ‘pre-’ in accordance with a particular tradition of thought (Vasilaki, 2012). Thus, this thesis aims to scrutinise the local and the global, the internal and the external, micro and macro, subject and object, sameness and difference, all in relation rather than in opposition (Collier and Ong, 2005; Allen, 2012). At the same time, however, following John Allen (2012: 190), my concern is not just multiplicity, relationality, and ephemerality, but ‘an emergent “thingness”

beyond relational effects'. It is this 'thingness' in relation to a particular site that this study ultimately hopes to approach.

A Frame of Community

Practice, derived from everyday experience, is affective (thus linked to one's subconsciousness), and is more site-specific than cultural-specific. It concerns a particular space, but not necessarily a particular society. Practice is an ever-changing condition of possibility available to actors in a given space, and such condition defines agency. In order to analyse the practice, a space is posited experimentally for investigation here.

To specify this space, this study considers people living in Japan—regardless of their nationalities—as a community of experience developed in an imaginative relational space (Harvey, 2006). Its membership is not defined by nationality but by shared experiences. Doing so means escaping determinism by simultaneously emphasising its communal character as well as individualistic elements. As this community is envisioned as a relational space, it is individually perceived but the cognisance is still vaguely shared among its members. In this community, a specific collective 'identity' can be superficially recognised, but it is merely an aggregate of individual perceptions. People continuously define and re-define themselves by assembling often unconsciously around a specific node and imagining their experiences in a particular environment that is however equally continuously changing. As they increase the apparently shared experiences over time, the community as an aggregation of individuals develops a tacit collective thought style, which contributes to this incipience. This community is in flux but simultaneously ostensibly stable due to the fundamental less-than-conscious character.

In this community, people develop their own geopolitical imaginations. This concept is borrowed from Agnew (2003; see also Agnew and Muscarà, 2011), but not without modification. For Agnew, the modern geopolitical imagination denotes the commonsensical knowledge of world politics that 'arose from European-American experience but was then projected on to the rest of the world and into the future in the theory and practice of world politics' (Agnew, 2003: 2). By contrast, this thesis aspires to depict the modern geopolitical imagination as an actual composite of numerous imaginations that can never be synthesised but in which locals connect themselves to the global in their own manners. Modern European geopolitical imagination is

superimposed on local imaginations on the surface, nonetheless buttressed by numerous different imaginations. Each imagination reflects its site-specific mode of power, rather than the power supposedly imposed. Following Allen (1999: 212), ‘power is always already spatial, but it is neither uniform, nor continuous over space. It is actualized in different and combined modes precisely because spatiality makes a difference to the effects that power can have’ (cf. Agnew, 1999). In the ostensibly hegemonic modern geopolitical imagination, heterogeneous imaginations of multiple subjects are actually imbricated without being amalgamated into one, generating the polymorphous nonetheless vibrant image of ‘the actual global’ (Collier and Ong, 2005). Thus, the term has to be re-conceptualised as a co-constructed projection at the intersection of knowledges, powers, and subjectivities. This thesis examines only a small part of those numerous imaginations, in which a different set of questions of space, knowledge, and power in world politics is addressed.

The State as a Thick Signifier

As Quentin Skinner (1969) points out, we only discern the unknown in terms of the known. This indicates a potential misunderstanding in knowledge circulation. Texts, the sole source for identifying and understanding a theory, can be modified to such an extent that it does not resemble to the original in the process of constant classification, interpretation and re-interpretation ‘in terms of the familiar’ (Skinner, 1969: 5). As Robert Cox (2002: 61) reminds us, ‘knowledge is reflexive, it knows itself in relation to its specific historical experience’. Thus, in inter-regional contexts, what Huysmans (1998) calls ‘thick signifier’ becomes even thicker. An investigation into the global distribution of knowledge has to be expanded to not only the meaning but also its genesis (Maruyama, 1987).

This thickness encompasses cognitive gaps among multiple actors. These gaps are often unnoticed not only by the author who created the knowledge, but also by the interpreter herself because the conversion, at least in its initial stage, is instigated contextually and reflexively from a different analytical space. These neglected gaps can be further widened in social science theories, as they were guided by a strife for ‘logic and abstraction’ (Maruyama, 1961: 68) and the results were supposed to be applicable to different contexts. The various cognitions, which developed in different analytical spaces, cannot be presumed to constitute parts of the same entity, since the assumed cognitive object and the tangible cognitions do not hold a one-on-one

relation, even if a cursory assessment initially indicates similarity (Maruyama, 1978). It requires a micro-move of analytical focus, which signifies first a shift in the field of investigation from boundaries to unconscious sites of meaning-making, the latter better assumed to be existing within each bounded space. The examination of boundaries and therefore conscious interactions among actors only comes as a second step.

As mentioned, the concept explored in the present thesis is the state as a living organism in classical geopolitics. The thesis confined the scope of investigation on how the Japanese interpreted the theory. The texts examined are scholarly works on geopolitics published between 1925 and 1945. In addition, works in related fields, relevant popular literature, and related policy documents are considered. Chapter 5 provides a detailed data. Originally proposed by Ratzel, the concept has been at the heart of geopolitics as it rationalises the expansion of the state as a *Lebensraum*. In the context of critical geopolitics and the history of the two World Wars, it is considered to be a justification of environmental determinism and Social Darwinism as it helped fortify the rule of the Europeans. However, it was also this concept that enabled Japanese scholars to argue for the supremacy of Japan even over European countries. In Japanese geopolitical imagination, the state as a living organism was envisaged as a fundamentally inclusive world whose boundary could be expanded to the entire globe, uniting it into one, where the Japanese would replace the Europeans as the leading race. It is this different, but neither abnormal nor exceptional, geopolitical imagination that this thesis explicates.

Chapter Structure

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a theoretical mapping of how political theory travels inter-regionally by examining existing research. The aim of this investigation is to clarify how local micro-politics affects the travelling of theory in an unnoticeable way. The first chapter looks at Western academic literature in terms of how theory travels temporally. It investigates existing approaches of global knowledge dissemination in relation to the recipient's agency. This chapter argues that in addition to the contextualism that is influencing the rising literature on international intellectual history, the literature of geography of knowledge identifies a tacit but important role of geography in the act of knowing, which then calls for further microanalyses. Chapter 2 examines related research in Japan in order to expand the consideration of

this spatial dimension of global knowledge dissemination. Using the example of international law, the chapter studies a curious inquiry that took place in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century around the state's appropriation of said notion. By revisiting this discussion, the thesis aims to explicate how Japanese scholars deepened the inquiry on the relation between knowledge and space.

Chapter 3 develops an analytical framework by addressing three remaining questions. The first question is about the epistemology and power in Japan during this period. The second question is how the local community and territory of knowledge are conceptualised avoiding the pitfall of determinism. The last question is concerned with how to envisage multiple spaces in which exotic knowledge is interpreted relationally. The discussion will revolve around the thought of Nishida Kitarō, a Japanese philosopher who developed a theory of place. It demonstrates that the epistemology in Japan during the period essentially had a subjectivist character that opposes Cartesian objectivism, the product of a context-dependent tradition stemming from an imported Confucianism. Chapter 4 is a bridging chapter to the case study. The first half of the chapter discusses the literature of critical geopolitics in relation to Japan. In the latter half, the historical development of Japan's geopolitical imagination will be explored.

Finally, chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to the analysis of Japanese geopolitics. The appropriation of geopolitical theories is analysed diachronically by establishing two time frames that correspond to the historical events of the periods: from 1925 to the mid-1930s, and from the mid-1930s to 1945. The initial application of classical geopolitics in Japan can be dated back to 1925, when a geographer rebuffed the increasing white supremacism in the Pacific with an empirical study on US immigrants in the region. Chapter 5 will revisit also the history of the concept of the state as a living organism from Ratzel to German geopolitics during the Weimar Period; this is in order to calibrate the mutation of the concept made by Japanese scholars. Chapter 6 explicates the *Daitōa Chiseigaku* (Geopolitics for the Greater East Asia), a Japanese geopolitics that aimed at creating a world order of regions in which the modern state system had to become obsolete in order to make the world literally one, supported by popular imagination.

1 Contextualising Traveling Theory

At the bottom, despite the differences in epochs and objectives, the representation of power has remained under the spell of monarchy. In political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king.

—Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I* (1976: 88-89)

1.1. Introduction

The question addressed in the present thesis is how locals interpret foreign political theory given the physical, and if applicable, intellectual, distances. Its main concern is in how indigenous political spatialisation exerts influence on an imported theory, questioning why and how is knowledge making the world apparently as one, despite the difference. This is an inquiry into collective subjectivity and power, one that questions a seemingly self-evident assumption in studies of world politics in general and in critical geopolitics in particular: that the diffusion of geographical knowledge is accompanied by the power of its author. The author is in most cases in the modern periods considered to be from ‘the West’. The aspiration of the present study is to take an approach ‘from within’ (Jenco, 2007), examining how theories are domesticated in a particular analytical space and identifying cognitive gaps between the so-called ‘original’ space. In this sense, it is a comparative study. In doing so, it strives to offer a framework for analysing global traveling theory. It thoroughly considers what ‘context’ means for traveling theory, interested more in the often overlooked micro-alterations than in visible transformations. Where and when does interpretation take place? Who is the subject of the action? What is being explained by the theory? Why and how is it done? By addressing these questions, the following two chapters provide a theoretical mapping of how political theory travels inter-regionally.

This chapter focuses mainly on Western academic literature. Edward Said (1982, 2001), who proposes the term ‘traveling theory’, stresses on the one hand the importance of origin and accordingly discounts the plurality of contexts through which theory travels, and on the other hand rightly notes the open-endedness of the evolution. Consequently, he does not take into sufficient account the question of context. A successful account of traveling political theory has to be approached as a product of

intertwining agencies across multiple times and spaces, taking both conscious and unconscious contextualisation into consideration. In order to disentangle the complexity, contexts must be cautiously reconstructed.

Classical geopolitics is a body of political theories that has influenced on studies of international politics (Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Ashworth, 2014; Buzan and Lawson, 2015). It is assumed to enlighten people with ‘scientific’ ways of envisioning the world. Despite its usefulness in considering the meaning of geography in the question of how political theory travels in the age of accelerated globalisation since the end of the nineteenth century, studies on this topic are still limited. In 2000, David Atkinson and Klaus Dodds published an edited volume on geopolitics as a traveling theory, focusing on both diversity and the ‘faint but identifiable traditions’ of geopolitical ideas (Atkinson and Dodds, 2000: xv). Despite the disciplinary concern that critical geopolitics has ended up to limit its inquiry largely within the West (Hepple, 2001; Dodds et al., 2013: 8), scholarly research in the geographical diversity has been far from enough (cf. Slater, 1993, 1994; Wusten and Dijkink. 2002; Sharp, 2013). Concentrating on the discourses of the Great Powers and hence following the premise of geographical knowledge *as* power (Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Agnew, 2003; Dalby, 2010; Dodds et al. 2013; Agnew, 2013; cf. Müller, 2008, 2013; Moisio, 2015), most contributions to the field have unwittingly neglected the question of subjectification in the global migration of knowledge, and accordingly tend to place more emphasis on the common geopolitical tradition among the Great Powers than the diversities.

By contrast, what this study is interested in is, when a political thought travels globally, what happens to power and subjectivity and how the political thought inflects the theory itself. It is concerned with the vital role of locality in the intellectual map of global knowledge dissemination and production. This locality will be addressed from three aspects: in terms of contexts, in terms of collective subjectivity and power structure, and in relation to globality. Judging from how the Japanese state has been largely seen as a fervent borrower of Western knowledge to become the first non-Western modern state, arguments could, in fact, potentially be made against my view, which sees Japan as a creative interpreter of Western knowledge instead. However, as I will argue later, this borrowing can be attained only when foreign knowledge is properly but implicitly or involuntarily amended by the vernacular, even though such amendment may have been indiscernible from the outside. This unseen evolution of traveling theory is the focus of this thesis.

The methodological inquiry has been relatively marginalised in Anglophone studies on geopolitics save a few notable exceptions (Bassin, 1987a, 1987b, 2004, 2007; Murphy, 1997; Atkinson and Dodds, 2000; Wusten et al., 2002; Dijkink, 1996). Therefore, I look for insights from debates emerged in the last two decades on geography of knowledge in the subfields of political and economic geography as well as international intellectual history in IR. This choice, I argue, is not a far-fetched one because critical geopolitics was originally inspired by ‘dissident’ scholars in IR (Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Buzan and Little, 2001). In addition, the forgotten legacy of classical geopolitics has been conversely revisited in the discipline of IR (Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Ashworth, 2010, 2014; Buzan and Lawson, 2015). Equally important is the fact that the two tracks—critical geopolitics and international intellectual history—share certain research interests, since they originated from the discontents with the predominantly positivist, ahistorical and Eurocentric approaches to world politics in the last century. In any case, one can say that inquiries on international intellectual history that extends beyond Europe and North America has just begun. Accordingly, in chapters 2 and 3, I will examine the debate on the importation of knowledge into Japan in the first half of the twentieth century.

This chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section identifies the questions of inter-regional migration of political theory. It suggests that the present study approaches a neglected gap between the general theory and local micro-political practices which in turn facilitate the localisation of theory. The next section elucidates on the relevance of twentieth-century Japan as a sample destination of traveling theory. It explains, in terms of power and subjectivity of traveling knowledge, modern Japan’s paradox in being the best student of Western learning. The analytical approach of this thesis is then discussed in the third part. The final section investigates existing approaches concerning the agency of the recipient, discussed in terms of local decontextualisation and recontextualisation of knowledge from two pairs of aspects: temporal and spatial, conscious and unconscious. In doing so, I highlight the importance of spatial contextualisation which takes place automatically at the early stage of the process.

1.2. Political Theory as an Oxymoron

The diffusion of modern political theory is generally understood in an oxymoronic way. While it is an artefact of a particular culture—European, to be precise—it has

been claimed to hold universal character. This prevailing view contends that any global diffusion of scientific theories, not only political theories, is fundamentally a one-way development from the West to the rest of the world, affirming the cultural and political superiority of the West. This view has only begun to be questioned by English-speaking scholars recently, who argue that a large number of powerful ideas and inventions that have enabled Western civilisation to claim its universality actually arrived from all over the world (Hobson, 2004, 2012a, 2012b). Among those ideas, political theory, whose origin was considered to be Greco-Roman and therefore ‘Western’ (Gress, 1998), still holds a special position with the copyright of the West, and its universal applicability is yet to be questioned more thoroughly. However, as Adriana Cavarero (2002) notes, the term political theory itself is an oxymoron because ‘theory’ denotes something universal whereas ‘politics’ requires continuous action. A corollary of this must be twofold: theory can be continuously interpreted through different practices; amendments in the course of interpretation are more practical and subtle, and less formal and evident. In order to clarify the subtle conversions, a comparative approach is needed, not in a conventional sense, but in the sense to which Fred Dallmayr (2004) alludes: that is, in search for universality in difference.

A Cognitive Gap?

For this approach, the issue is not only *what* to learn but also *how* to enact the learning at each local site. This ‘how’ can gradually change the theory itself, engendering a neglected cognitive gap in traveling theories. Even if, as Anssi Paasi (2009: 222) states, theorising is ‘the human intellect to explain or understand phenomena by rational means’, the rationality can be context-dependent. Inoguchi Takashi (2007: 369) defines theory as ‘an amalgam of proposition, paradigm, perspective, and ism’. A crucial question follows: whose theory, or theory for whom, as this can differ among societies. Nevertheless, this potential antilogy between theory, practice, and context in relation to political subjectivity has received relatively little attention in the studies of international politics. Because an essential premise of international politics is the embrace of the modern European state system by diverse cultures (Qin, 2016: 11), it sees the European state as *the* subject. Such a view renders political theory highly rigid. John Agnew (1999, 2003, 2015, 2016) calls such dominant assumption a ‘territorial trap’, whereby the state is considered to exert exclusive power within its bounded territory. Whilst the insistence is insightful, there is however another way of

questioning this preoccupation: has the trap been active everywhere in the world as a spaceless and timeless ‘conception of statehood as the unique font of power in the modern world’ (Agnew, 1999: 176)¹, even when the concept has moved to a society that has a different way of organising space? This is not to merely argue that there have been different international systems (Ringmar, 2012; Qin, 2016). My question is whether the expansive implementation of the apparently identical concept can really be equalised as the expansion of the very system that gave birth to the concept. A system can become divergent only if ‘different types of relationships’, and not necessarily different constituent units, are acknowledged (Qin, 2016: 12). Even in the West, as Stuart Elden (2009: xxv-xxvii) has pointed out, boundary, which forms territory, is a relatively new notion that ‘only become[s] possible in their modern sense through a notion of space’. The modern European state as the standard may then merely nominal as the concept travels globally, since spatiality when perceived differently can generate indispensable differences.

In a 2001 paper, Barry Buzan and Richard Little pose a challenging question to the discipline of IR: Why has the concept of ‘international systems’ ‘failed to travel beyond disciplinary boundaries and address popular debates’ (Buzan and Little, 2001: 26; see also Wilkinson, 2007)? A more pressing question is: Did the European international system, together with the concept of the state, really reach beyond regional boundaries, replacing and expunging indigenous political practices as well as formal institutions in other regions? Do theory and politics always go hand in hand even when it is transplanted into a new site that has been organised around different political values and systems? More than a decade later, Buzan, together with George Lawson, ask also to what extent the analytical tools developed in contemporary Western academic world are applicable to other times and places (Buzan and Lawson, 2015: 378; see also Kang, 2003). The modern diffusion of political knowledge from Europe is often considered to be a source of Western domination in world politics. This view has been enhanced further by the fact that even in non-Western scholarship, the gap between local practices and theories of foreign origin tends to be neglected in the name of the universal applicability of (Western) science (Nakamura, 1971). Critical perspectives, notably post-colonial studies, has attempted to unearth this

¹ Elden (2013: 3) makes the interesting observation that while Agnew’s claim is insightful, it has unfortunately led to ‘an avoidance of the topic altogether’.

tendency as power-knowledge relations, in which the subject of the action is invariably the West. Although this is certainly an important aspect in postcolonial settings, my attempt here is to re-examine this unexamined premise of asymmetric power and knowledge by thoroughly interrogating why and how knowledge has been applied by locals. As Foucault suggests, ‘to begin the analysis with a “how” is to suggest that power as such does not exist’ (1982b: 786). The appropriation of Western knowledge is readily seen as having influenced a systemic transformation of the non-Western world. However, for the recipient community, the application was a necessary evil to sustain their own community (Maruyama, 1986, 47-56).

As Leigh Jenco (2007, 2015) notes, contemporary critical and cross-cultural investigations on political theory tend to take a dialogical path, largely motivated by scholars’ aspiration to expose the parochial nature of Western universal claims. Although this in itself is a necessary exercise, it tends to facilitate another parochialism which may induce a ‘danger of congealment’ (Dallmyr, 2004: 254). As it often stresses the passivity of locals (most ironically), it is likely to ignore the question of enactment of the theory in the end. Yet, ‘theory is itself constituted by the process of generalising from one particular context to another’ for any culture (Jenco, 2015: 19). Another constructive question has to be asked, then: What helps the locals recontextualise as well as decontextualise, enabling the generalisation of a particular theory from elsewhere notwithstanding the possible contradictions? Here, at the heart of the inquiry is locality, which is understood as ‘uniqueness in plural’ (Cavarero, 2002: 514; see also Massey, 1993). The dialogical path does not account sufficiently for this question of locality, because it focuses largely on inter-cultural negotiations by treating knowledge, rather than locality, as an object, hastily premising on not only the asymmetric power relations, but also on common awareness and ways of thinking that often aspire for universality (which is ultimately inherent in modernity). Accordingly, investigations under this dialogical approach only propose *the* alternative, and tend to be trapped by logocentrism without paying sufficient attention to divergent methods of inquiry developed by the local community over the course of time (Jenco, 2007). By contrast, this thesis is interested in the diverse ways of recontextualisation by the locals—which is an issue of where, who, what and how—questioning the efficacy of the alternative. This interrogation highlights ‘knowing’ as a process. It is an inquiry into power and subjectivity. It aims to portray the internal logic of a community and explicates the ‘uniqueness in plural’ of interpretation that

arises in the gap between the analytical space of original theory and that of local politics.

Localisation of Theory

Indeed, this gap can be facilitative and productive, linking up the old and the new in the process of knowledge dissemination. In IR, major concepts such as the state and region are geographical. However, as James Sidaway (1997) has already pointed out some time ago, the contribution of indigenous knowledge to these ideas is still habitually out of sight, despite the growing concern on Euro-centrism. In Japan, the notion of the state (*kokka*) itself was first imported from China, having localised into an administrative term during the Edo Period (1603-1868) before being re-imported from the West (Ogawa, 1928a). The term ‘the state’ was not newly created, but was doubly translated into an indigenous term. Moreover, other related concepts, such as nation, state, and nation-state, tend to be interpreted into this one word, reflecting the alleged homogeneity in its usage.²

As can be seen, imported ideas are in many cases accepted by the indigenous community through unique interpretations, negotiations and domestications. The reception of foreign knowledge therefore has to be understood not only as a vindication of change but also a proof of its continuity. It indicates that in an imported concept, such as ‘the state’, conflictual ideas can stand abreast. As Nigel Thrift (1999: 304) argues, concepts are indefinite. It is open-ended, not just temporally but also spatially. Despite this argument, local readings rarely come to the surface, except a few notable investigations to date (e.g. Ringmar, 2012). The historical experiences of Japan as the first non-Western modern nation-state may offer scholars of world politics some nuanced and comprehensive insights on this conundrum.

1.3. Japan as a Destination of Traveling Theory

Before proceeding, I shall briefly mention how this thesis frames the collective as an analytical object. For now, the collective studied in this thesis is called ‘Japan’, although this will be further examined in chapter 3. To use the term ‘Japan’ is not to reduce it to the state, but to denote a geographically confined political community whose members are in flux. The same goes for other geographical monikers such as

² The notion of *kokka* will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

‘the West’, ‘Europe’, ‘Germany’, or ‘China’. The travelling of theory is conceptualised as inter-regional rather than inter-cultural, because the main concern of this study is how spatiality makes difference, rather than the manifest role of cultural difference (cf. Qin, 2016).

Japan is a distinctive case for examining the role of a recipient community in the course of worldwide dissemination of political knowledge for three reasons. First, Japan has a relatively lucid history of assimilating foreign knowledge chiefly due to its geo-historical and socio-cultural confinement. Being an archipelago located at the edge of the Eurasian continent, the community has, in the course of history, selectively assimilated as well as precluded external knowledge in an effort to sustain the community (Hasegawa, 1942; Maruyama, 1984; Hobson, 2004; Hirakawa, 2006a, 2006b). The government has employed political theories from abroad since the seventh century, when the country experienced a major political reform by importing the Chinese systems of governance.³ The Meiji Restoration started in the mid-1860s relied on Western political systems, seemingly abandoning the long-standing tradition of political system borrowed from China. This expansive transformation, modelling itself to be a modern Western-style state, was accomplished by assertive assimilation policies known as *honyaku shugi* (translationism) (Maruyama and Kato, 1998). In total, a staggering 14,643 titles of books were translated into Japanese from 1868 to 1944 (Nichigai Associates, 2007).⁴ The Japanese government sent many students to Europe and the United States, most of whom later became politicians or educators. Nonetheless, despite these efforts, Japan kept great intellectual and physical distances from Europe, the source of those knowledge, as it avoided explicit territorial colonisation. In addition, its language is very different from European languages, a point that will be elaborated in chapter 3. Moreover, the isolationist policy known as *sakoku*⁵ that had lasted for two centuries prior to the Meiji Restoration generated an enormous intellectual gap with Europe. Despite the assimilation policy, Japan had been neither controlled nor colonised fully, unlike many other non-Western countries.

³ It is known as *Taika no Kaishin*

⁴ This number does not specify original languages, however most of them are European languages.

⁵ Recent studies question the existence of *sakoku* as an established policy and argue that *sakoku* itself is myth after the Meiji Restoration. According to Narita (2012: 36), the term *sakoku* itself was a translation from a book written by Engelbert Kaempfer. See for example Arano (2003). For a discussion in English, see Hobson (2004: chapter 4).

Second, it was a sense of urgency to avoid the crisis of colonisation that turned Japan into a volitional and creative assimilator of Western knowledge. This alludes to the possibility that Japan creatively ‘localized’ (Acharya, 2014; Devetak, 2015) the external body of knowledge, rather than simply introducing Western wisdom, in an effort to sustain, rather than to transform, the indigenous society.

Finally, during the first half of the twentieth century, Japan took advantage of the assimilated Western knowledge and became the sole non-Western imperialist power. It proves that the power brought by Western political theory was useful even for non-Western, non-white countries for their own interest. Moreover, given the first two points, it can be inferred that political theory could be modified for its utility. Thus, these conditions render Japan a perfect experimental ground for the inquiry of why and how political theory is interpreted and performed in a foreign community particularly in terms of power and practices.

The Japanese Paradox: Power and Subjectivity

The last point also implies a grave but unexamined paradox in modern international history especially in terms of the discourse of Western domination, and highlights the importance of Japan as a case in particular relation to the contemporary discussion on Global IR (cf. Acharya, 2014). Becoming the sole non-Western power, Japan was said to have fought the Second World War as a struggle among imperial powers (Agnew, 2003). However, this perspective misses the point that the Pacific War was an international racial war unprecedented in history, particularly from a Japanese point of view (cf. Dower, 1986). In addition, as this thesis will show, Japan in its war discourse strived for a new world order based on their traditional geopolitics. It was the righteousness of the new order, not the imperialist order, that Japanese scholars supported, however paradoxically by employing European geopolitics. This fact is little discussed in the studies of international politics. Even in historical studies, Japan’s aspiration for a new world order is more often seen as a militarist propaganda and rarely treated as a decent reason for which the country fought the war (Dower, 2010: 438). However, as this thesis will demonstrate, the discourse was widely and even passionately supported in Japanese society. Moreover, there is still an intensive controversy within Japan to date on why Japan fought the war despite the clear

realisation that they would not be able to win it at least militarily.⁶ Meanwhile, the main components of geopolitical theories were racism and geographical determinism which underpinned European supremacism (Ó Tuathail, 1996b). Given the above, how geopolitics in Japan supported the racial Pacific War is a question worth reconsidering.

The somewhat inconsistent trajectory of Japan sits uneasily either in common postcolonial discussions or in discussions concerning imperial powers. Consequently, scholars are likely to draw an image of Japan as an exception in world politics (Campbell, 1992; Hagström, 2015; Buzan and Lawson, 2015: 203; Agnew, 2017). The fact that such inconsistency has been simultaneously treated as evidence to the righteousness of Eurocentric assumptions on human progress (Rostow, 1990; cf. Hobson, 2004) deepens this confusion. This logical discrepancy casts an intriguing question for contemporary debates on power and knowledge in international relations. It is in this context that modern Japan's assimilation of knowledge contains potential to unearth the assertive role of the locals.

1.4. Assemblage as a Global Significance

Critical constructivist approaches of IR in general, and critical geopolitics in particular, have tried to uncover the social construction of 'Western' foreign policy discourse as a meaning-making practice. They argue that 'scientific' geopolitical knowledge is often abused in such a construction (for a recent example, see Mead, 2014). For critical writers, it is discourse that creates boundaries between the self and the other (Dalby, 1990; Doty, 1996; Campbell, 1997; Hansen, 2006), often suppressing the subjectivity of non-Western countries. However, a neglected but equally important inquiry is 'who is the self' and 'who is the other'. This question is important because it defines the context of discourse. As Ó Tuathail (1996b: 72) has argued, geopolitics is 'best studied in its messy con-textuality'. Although this plea has warned against the reductionist account of classical geopolitics, it has also missed the exact messy con-textuality and multiplicity of classical geopolitics *per se* as it invariably posits the self in a geopolitical discourse as the West and the other as non-West. Consequently, the answer to the question 'Who is universal?', i.e., 'who is the

⁶ In Japan, one of the biggest national debates since the end of the war has been why the state had fought the war in the first place. For a recent discussion, see for example Ōsugi (2007) and Itō (2011).

self?’ in a comparative study (Dallmayr, 2004: 253) is likely to be, not surprisingly, the West again.

When the point of view is displaced from Europe to other regions, however, the need to clarify ‘whose context’, rather than ‘which context’, comes to the fore. In the example of Japan and democracy, despite George W. Bush’s claiming Japan as a vindication of American promotion of democracy (see introduction), to what extent and by whom Japan has been democratised, Westernised, and even modernised is still an unresolved question particularly in the United States (for example, Zakaria, 2008; see also Inoguchi, 2000). The irony is that the discourse of the exact Japanese has superficially followed the American discourse. To illustrate, the Japanese wish for normalisation of their country, famously declared in a book written by the Japanese politician Ozawa Ichiro (1993), has not been accomplished so far. Recent contributions even insist that Japan is actually normal (Hook et al., 2005; Samuels, 2007). However, as Katzenstein and Okawara (2001: 34) have aptly argued, ‘[n]o polity remains frozen in time, and none returns to its “natural”, historical origin’. In other words, the aspiration of Japan’s normalisation is never attained not (only) because Japan has yet to change, but rather because the analytical standpoint *always* stays the same, namely the contemporary West which has neither historicity nor spatiality.

By contrast, once the same question is addressed in terms of subjectivity and context, the persistent discourse disappears as the question highlighted becomes by whom Japan is perceived as normal or abnormal. Ido Oren’s study (1995) is a case in point as it unearths how history changes subjectivity and therefore such criteria. He demonstrates how Japan had already been well democratised according to nineteenth-century American standard. Likewise, John Dower’s critical analysis (2010) indicates how meaningless the standard itself can be; he points out the curious similarities between Japan’s authoritative imperialism and the Bush presidency, both of which were willing to violate existing laws. In this way, both of the states have been undemocratic and racially discriminatory (cf. Campbell, 1992).

In addition to these arguments, I want to stress the performative aspect of knowledge and subjectivity among multiple actors, which are always in flux and negotiable. The question of analytical space must be addressed in this study, through analysing the discourse of abnormality as a co-construction among different subjects in respectively different spaces. Oren’s study on the standard of democracy is limited

to the American point of view, but as his study implies, each actor living in each historical space may come up with a different usage for the same word, even though they are all Americans. Moreover, as Dower's study demonstrates, the supposedly unchanging concept is continuously evolving in multiple spaces in parallel, not uni-linear, fashion. Also, a particular meaning is crystallised in between the spaces, realising an occasional encounter in these spaces that often transcends geography and even history. Martin Müller (2008: 328) proposes that as subjects are 'positioned at the intersection of different discourses' through these complex developments, [their] subjectivity may be articulated differently' in different analytical spaces. Here, what is important is not so much the contents of democracy as a standardised concept, but the way in which it performs in each space for a particular subject as an amorphous idea (Allen, 1999; Ringmar, 2012, 2016).

In essence, these articulations are unintentional and contingent acts. Power and subjectivity in the dominant discourse emerge out of the horizon where multiple projections incidentally meet. As different standpoints articulate different subjectivities and present different aspects of an allegedly identical object, the object comes to be amorphous when it is observed as a whole from a wider scope. In the discourse of Japan as an abnormal state, the perception of abnormality can differ among actors and is in constant flux. Moreover, the perception can vary even for an actor as her subjectivity shifts occasionally. Nonetheless, these multiple subjectivities bespeak Japan's abnormality in unison. In essence, the discourse is a co-construction without a direct consent between multiple subjects who hold different subjectivities in different analytical spaces. The 'emergent capabilities' for subjectivities and both bottom-up and top-down power (Acuto and Curtis, 2014: 8) can be detected among these multiple subjects. This neglected plurality can be unearthed only when each of the social capacities is calibrated 'in the creative action of concrete actors involved in concrete situation' (Jackson, 2009: 657). This plurality of analytical spaces can be discerned only as an assemblage of manifold discourses. Here, a context in a macro perspective serves as actual *contexts* for micro perspectives. As such, in international politics, concepts like the state, democracy, and modernity have developed without formal consensus as products of these multiple perspectives in plural spaces. It is this convoluted multiplicity of global grammar that in practice constitutes the perceived representative grammar in world politics. The issue is *how* power in knowledge is imagined by multiple actors, rather than *who* holds such power. In order to unearth

this hidden multiplicity, the questions of power, territory, and epistemology need to be clarified, through a careful reconstruction of micro contexts.

Power

Although the discourse of abnormal Japan may be seen as a dominating, major standpoint, it is in fact supported by multiple minor standpoints in practice. The minor standpoints are not necessarily in harmony with each other, but they only seemingly and vaguely support the dominant image. In this ephemeral and ostensible co-construction, it is the ‘local capacities’ (Haugaard and Groverde, 2009: 192), rather than the globalising knowledge *per se*, that provide each subject a subjectivity to envisage a specific interpretation. Japan is perceived as the abnormal state not only because of American elitist discourse, but because the Japanese found a way to make sense of the discourse in their own context. In this respect, the sense in which Japan is abnormal can vary despite the superficial agreement.

In order to understand this intricate relationality of subjectivities and knowledge, different ‘modes of power’⁷ have to be taken into consideration, relying on a term recently introduced by Buzan and Lawson (2015), though with a slightly different nuance. The instrumental mode of power perpetuated by the strong is what has been predominantly employed in international politics research. However, this monolithic understanding of power could end up misinterpreting knowledge dissemination. Following Hannah Arendt, power has to be distinguished from violence, strength, force, or authority. Power ‘needs no justification but legitimacy’ (Arendt, 1970: 42-55). I propose three categories of modes of power: power to, power over, power from below. John Allen (2003) argues that the conventional mode of power in international politics is assumed to exercise over others. Whilst the former talks about domination and is presumed to work within a territory, the latter is about the ‘potential for empowerment’ (Allen, 2003). Drawing on John L. Austin’s term, Habermas (1977) points out that this power has an illocutionary aspect and therefore its territory is defined by power. As Müller (2008) argues, critical geopolitics and critical constructivist scholarship tend to employ the ‘agency concept’ of discourse, since they are designed as an ‘interpretive-explanatory’ research. This particular conception of

⁷ This term refers to ‘the material and ideational relations that they are generative of both actors and the ways in which power is exercised’ (Buzan and Lawson, 2015: 23).

discourse gives agency power over space. It is this agency concept that has allowed research in critical geopolitics to claim that geopolitical practices by the Great Powers, particularly by the United States, are a-geographical, since those practices obliterate the complexity of real geography (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992). However, the pitfall of this analysis is that, despite the idea that power is spatially confined, it is assumed in these research that knowledge diffusion can expunge this limit. That is, discourse in the United States is automatically assumed to be effective outside of the US territory. Because of this unexamined assumption, the analysis ‘inevitably [leads] on to a Eurocentric story’ (Hobson, 2003: 295) as it automatically endows power to the West. Meanwhile, as Jason Dittmer and Nicholas Gray (2010) have pointed out, the most notable recent development of critical geopolitics is popular geopolitics, in which the agency-centric concept is about to be abandoned (see also Dittmer, 2014). This development also suggests the neglected roles of power ‘from below’ and power ‘to’, which are *in* knowledge, rather than *of* knowledge, in geopolitical discourse.

Territory

Whilst this power *in* knowledge is mobile, it needs to be interpreted before being actualised by a local mode of power when it is transplanted into another territory. This territory, in Saskia Sassen’s (2013) usage, is not confined within a state, but is a terrain where a context is shared to make a new knowledge intelligible to the people living within it in terms of its specific power. Its boundary is indistinct because the common ground exists as a matter of degree. The territory is continuously assembled and disassembled as power is negotiated and renegotiated within it (Allen and Cochrane, 2010). As Allen (1999: 207) suggests, power can be ‘mobilised at different sites and locations on a network’; it ‘mutates and is arguably constituted through the combination of different modes employed and their interaction’. Likewise, Neil Smith (2005: 51) states that ‘[p]ower is never de-territorialized; it is always specific to particular places’ (see also Elden, 2009: xxvii).

Following Maruyama Masao, power without coercion is how ideology as power fundamentally works in a space. He insists that any worldview contains both fiction and reality, apart from its value. Therefore, the choice is not ‘between a “fictitious” environment and a “real” one’, but that which sounds better to a specific group of

people (Maruyama, 1969⁸: 344: Maruyama 1964). This complexity is hard to be captured because ‘we never went any further than to see it as a combination of power and ideology. We have not investigated the problem deeply from the standpoint of the daily feelings of the people who lived in that world’ (Maruyama, 1964: 343, 1969). Ideology is inextricably linked to our everyday realm, and therefore its power is essentially site-specific. The mechanism in which it works can be meticulously observed only by experiencing the particular space. It neither comes out of thin air nor simply comes down from above, but has its own epistemological constructs rooted in a community of people who are caught by the power. To become power, as Václav Havel (1985) states, it must be supported by ‘the thousands of details that guarantee him a relatively tranquil life “in harmony with society”’. Relying on his example, the slogan ‘Workers of the world, unite!’ is in a greengrocer’s shop window neither because the shop owner wishes for it nor because everyone would read it, but ‘simply because it has been done that way for years, because everyone does it, and because that is the way it has to be’. Thus, power works because it is a part of our landscape. Ideology is but ‘an excuse that everyone can use’ (Havel, 1985: 27-29) backed by a particular landscape. Power in its territory does not necessarily need to be enforced but only to be understood as such.

Epistemology

Here, a question to be asked is: who has the defining capabilities of the territory (Sassen, 2013: 39)? Barry Barnes (1988) posits a similar question to consider power and society. For him, social power is defined as ‘the capacity of action in a society’. This capacity is known by the members of that society ‘as their routine practices and competences’. A society is ‘a self-referring distribution of knowledge’ which has to be learnt by its members. This learning is for Barnes twofold (1988: 58-59). The referent and use of knowledge has to become well informed, and the referent is continuously constituted and reconstituted. The knowledge is performative, self-referring, and self-validating. It is a ‘shared episteme’ that gives actors the ‘capacity for action which enables us to do things which we could not do otherwise’ (Haugaard, 2008). If power ‘corresponds to the human ability not just to act but act in concert’, as Arendt (1970: 44) states, it has to be based on *episteme*. Putative power in knowledge

⁸ It is the English version of Maruyama (1964).

becomes intelligible only when it is supported by a particular *episteme* (Haugaard, 2008: 122), which however can change even abruptly (Barnes, 1988).

Thus, knowledge and society is mutually constitutive. It is knowledge supported by *episteme* that defines the compass of a society. For Barnes, a powerful person is powerful because she is surrounded by a ring of reference and not because she is intrinsically powerful. The powerful is socially framed through a shared system of knowledge. Power is supposed to work essentially within a territory where the epistemology is commonly shared. In Barnes' framework, the strategic agents are, strictly speaking, not humans, but rather the 'discretion in the direction of social action' (Barnes, 1988: 58) distributed among actors.

The Same as the Universal

Therefore, the socio-political power expressed in a particular text does not read in the same way outside of its original territory, where epistemology is different. In addition, when geographical concepts are appropriated by non-Western states, a local society demands the knowledge an intricate set of power 'over' and power 'to'. This is because the motivation to espouse the geographical knowledge, for example, the state, contains dual aims: locals need the power to act together internationally, whilst state power is needed to govern people simultaneously. Yet, the essence of the modern democratic state is theoretically 'power to' and 'power from below'. In the meantime, it is possible that some kind of canonical function of the theory is retained through the voyage. Furthermore, in most cases, the theory is comprehended in terms of local knowledge as mentioned above. Analogous references do not necessarily generate the same framing as the subject of the text is replaced in the course of interpretation. The congruence of collective epistemologies between the original and the new subjects is never guaranteed in inter-regional contexts. Hence, whilst a reference is seemingly identical as text, how to read it and what to get from it must be different.

To be sure, the modern state system has been spread and copied all over the world, ostensibly expanding the territoriality of international society from Europe to the whole globe. This observation has allowed students of critical geopolitics and international politics in general to prefer 'power over' as an analytical tool, which consequently made them focus on what a text is. By contrast, the question for the present study is what locals do to the text, however unwittingly. If the recipients of knowledge do not share the same *episteme*, their acceptance of the theory in question

primarily depends on how they read texts, rather than what the author of the text says. Therefore, the logocentricity in the analysis of knowledge transfer must be rectified. Local people employ exotic theories primarily because through their readings, the theoretical texts are adopted in such a way that provide a form of power in the local territory, and not because the West deployed the coercive power of discourse. In the context of the modern state system, the appropriation has been largely done in order to attain state independence. The apparent consolidation of an international society based on the European model should rather be understood as a fallout.

As Rosa Vasilaki (2012: 20) notes, the real question for post-Western political theory has to begin from how locals have identified ‘the Same’⁹ that indicates the universal in foreign theory in order to domesticate it. Even if it is read by an actor who holds a different epistemology, there must remain something in common in the text in order for it to be accepted. The clue to understanding the Same and its complexity lies less in the contents but more in how it is read; less about agreements, but the ‘will towards the same’ in Sakai Naoki’s words (Sakai, 2000: 5), which however contains antagonism. When being read differently by multiple actors in each analytical space, the Same plays a remarkable role in the process of knowledge localisation. It is this something, superficially common but substantially uncommon, that makes the unfamiliar familiar. Texts, symbols, and ideas certainly play a crucial role, not because they are understood in an identical way, but precisely in a different way. The signifier becomes ‘thicker’ in an inter-regional context, as a result of this complex relation of sameness and difference (Huysmans, 1998). If Western political theory has been traveling all over the world despite its oxymoronic nature, the Same—the universal applicability supported by diverse local practices—is what makes this travel possible. The Same is espoused paradoxically by difference as it is interpreted and deployed by different practices. Here, then, the source of the Japanese paradox becomes intelligible: the paradox originates from distinctive Japanese political practices that advocated foreign knowledge. A difference that accepted the Same simultaneously—this was what made Japan the putative first non-Western follower of the West.

⁹ Here Vasilaki (2012) follows the usage of Alain Badiou.

Universal as a Node without Consent

This idea of ‘the Same supported by difference’ is significant because it can build up a constellation that supports allegedly hegemonic power through a joint capacity of action without consent in the global arena. By focusing on the unexplored will of the locals, I do not mean to argue for agency over structure. I am neither arguing merely for performativity. Rather, by taking an anti-structural approach relying on the concept of assemblage (Marcus and Saka, 2006), my intention is to examine the travel of theory as an intertwining evolution that traverses different structures. Here, the key to understand the Same lies in local practice and articulations of subjectivities. As Agnew (2009: 431) insists, ‘sets of often “doubtful particularism” are turned into universal truth to justify this or that action without much immediate connection to the time and place to which the particular metaphor or analogy is being applied’. What has to be pinned down is the ‘strangely familiar character of analogy’ in a specific knowledge that activates the knowledge.

The intertwining relation between the same and difference alludes to the idea that the term ‘universal’ can have two distinctive meanings: ‘universal history’ and ‘universal significance and validity’ (Collier and Ong, 2005: 10-11). The term ‘global’ is better understood in the latter meaning, since what makes global phenomena ‘global’ is their ‘distinctive capacity’ to be applicable to diverse spheres of life. This significance enables texts to be decontextualised and recontextualised across diverse social and cultural situations traversing territory and context.¹⁰ What is global, hence, is a superficially identical reference with substantially different framings. What we need is an investigation ‘at the point where the global is inserted and translated into the local’ (Abrahamsen and Williams, 2009). Despite the prominence, an assemblage that embodies the global is rather ephemeral, since it is supported by multiple factors.

It is this nodal point—ephemeral but lacking a formal consensus—that generates localisation and domestication of foreign knowledge in a particular space, connecting the exogenous to the indigenous, making the world apparently as one. Seen in the global space, however, the elements do not form a coherent whole. Instead, the relations between those elements carry an ‘emergent thingness’ that ‘set[s] themselves

¹⁰ Cox (2002: 46), relying on Vico, introduces a similar concept of ‘imaginative universals’. According to Cox, Vico, thought that at the primitive stage of language creation, people, not being capable of abstraction but perceiving everything as concrete and particular, imagined ‘the name of a god or of a hero that express certain qualities’. Vico considered that it contained the ‘germ of’ concepts ‘with the dawn of reason’.

up as internal relations and, on that basis, claim[s] prior knowledge of what the powers of a particular object or entity can necessarily do' (Allen, 2012: 191). This may sound like a claim of 'relative autonomy' for the component parts (Anderson et al., 2012), but labelling it as simply 'autonomy' is a misnomer because it is a largely unconscious procedure and the conditions are always evolving through actions, as will be explained later. Paradoxically, the subject's subjectivity automatically makes the subject choose the law to which it is subject to, turning it into a docile body (Alcoff, 2000). It is this significant but evanescent (and therefore often neglected) assemblage that the Japanese experiences can demonstrate.

To date, most critical perspectives in international politics have focused on asymmetric power-knowledge relations between non-Western and Western, especially Anglo-American, countries, aiming to make the silenced voices of the non-West heard by discarding universal claims of Western knowledge. However, this insistence serves the purpose of ameliorating the agency of the locals as they hypothesise the repression without sufficient verification. It has not sufficiently examined the contexts of the putative other but focusing on solely that of the self. What is needed here is the recognition of a 'situated epistemology' (Thrift, 1999: 303). It 'recognises very strong limits on what can be known and how we can know it because the way human subjects are embodied as beings in time-space, because of their interconnected position in multiple social relations, and because there are numerous perspectives on, and metaphors of, what counts as knowledge, or more precisely, knowledges'. Rather than speaking for local voices, local practices '[need] to be valued for themselves as the somatic legacy we all live by, with and for' (Thrift, 1999: 300). Any point of view is equally susceptible to limitations for any actor, and no view starts from nowhere. In addition, rather than attempting to envisage the different views in order to compose the whole, the congruity of the object itself has to be questioned in an inter-regional context (Maruyama, 1978). To paraphrase, the supposedly partial knowledge does not necessarily indicate the existence of only one whole (see also Jenco, 2007: 743). What an investigation into the inside of 'the other' unveils is not just a missing piece of intact knowledge, but the fundamental diversity of knowledges. However, emphasising differences would only miss the duality of the global. In order to make the world apparently as one, there must still exist a 'sameness' that actualises hegemonic power. Stressing only on differences could leave us too blind to acknowledge the essential sameness that causes global phenomena. Rather

than aspiring for the truth and the alternative, therefore, we should start from acknowledging the limitation of any epistemologies and the fundamental uncertainty of knowledge (Takeuchi, 1959). Only by acknowledging this fundamental cognitive difference can we begin inter-regional dialogue in a more pragmatic sense.

1.5. Contextualising International Political Theory

Recent scholarship has started to engage with the question of non-Western agency in search of more egalitarian relationships in world politics (Jenco, 2007; Vasilaki, 2012; Acharya, 2014). In contrast to colonial efforts which transplanted knowledge from one particular region to another, locals have begun to import political knowledge based on their own needs, which may even result in a lopsided knowledge diffusion to the opposite side. The relation between actors and audience in this process is not simply dialogical. What is often missed is that the locals employ exogenous political theory to enhance their own territory, in which they have their own audience. In the case of Japan, its assimilation of knowledge was from the outset based on its own will, which however contained contradictions. It imported Western political theories not to transcend its geographical border and become part of the Western world, but to enhance its own society to be a thoroughly Japanese one (Maruyama, 1986). For Japan, transcending the border simultaneously meant enhancing the border.

In the post-colonial world, the recognised creator of knowledge, namely the West, can no longer be assumed as an imposer. In each community, modern knowledge, regardless of its origin, evolves in unique ways despite superficial similarities. As such, the quasi autonomy of the locals has significantly increased more than ever, rendering insufficient both the theatrical (e.g. Ringmar, 2012) and the dialogical perspective, which tend to divide the world into two for international-level analysis. This is because the outcome is not only the product of dialogue, but also a contingent outcome of multiple and convoluted interpretations and transactions, which cannot be depicted by simple dichotomies such as the West and the Rest, the imposer and the imposed, or domestic and international.

My aim, by charting the theoretical debate of traveling theory, is to examine how the Same is supported by diverged local practices in the seemingly unified global space. ‘The Same’ here refers to theory’s applicability in diverse contexts—an applicability that cannot be attributed to the content of theory *per se*—while difference refers to local practices. My argument does not affirm the universal claim of theory;

rather, it suggests that the universality of theory is only universally supported by multiple actors with different practices for different contexts. Investigating how the Same is substantiated by difference in the course of global migration of political theory calls for a conception that sees knowledge as a verb rather than a noun (Livingstone, 2005; Ibert, 2007). In other words, I am concerned with how locals read texts as a two-way process of decontextualisation *and* recontextualisation of foreign knowledge. Like a case of deductive reasoning, this study identifies an apparent commensurability which actually contains the possibility for a diverged framing. Through this process, the subject of knowledge is replaced, and power accordingly is understood in a different way. In the following, I will chart the theoretical debate by thinking through two axes: time and space on the one hand, conscious and unconscious on the other.

In Terms of Time

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, IR has experienced a historiographical turn (Bell, 2001). Following David Armitage (2004), this turn has been facilitated as disciplinary discontents on its previously ahistorical perspectives became evident. Together with a post-positivist turn as well as a linguistic turn within the discipline, what Armitage calls ‘international intellectual history’ has come to be a promising field of study (Armitage, 2004, 2012: introduction and chapter 1). A notable development in line with the inquiry of this chapter is the textual turn, in which texts are understood as ‘extremely complex historical objects’ (Bell, 2001: 116), drawing on contextualism of the Cambridge school of history (Armitage, 2004; Devetak, 2014). It is no surprise that this move has also triggered a revival of realism, the central tenet of IR. Here, two developments are of importance for the present study. First, recent IR studies have identified a diversity in the realist tradition that has predominated the discipline, indicating that what ‘realism’ means is highly subjective to contexts (Jones, 1997; Bell, 2001; Armitage, 2004; Molloy, 2006; Ashworth, 2010, 2014; Rösch, 2015). Consequently, realism has come to be understood as a ‘mode of thought’ (Molloy, 2006; Ashworth, 2010) shared in a collective. In other words, instances where the codification of theory has unsuspectingly undermined the intention of the original authors have surfaced, highlighting the roles of the reader and her social environment. These findings are equally significant to geopolitics, because geopolitics is considered a realist perspective of international politics (Guzzini, 2012; see also Ó Tuathail, 1996: 169).

According to Molloy, it was only in the 1950s and 1960s when realism came to be recognised as a ‘scientific theory’ (Molloy, 2006). In other words, it was during the period of escalation of the Cold War and the arms race that made American IR scholars strong adherents of science. Analysing Hans Morgenthau’s life and his works, Felix Rösch (2015) states that the misinterpretations of his works by later generations are largely due to the negligence of Morgenthau’s original context. In fact, Morgenthau’s realism is neither Cartesian nor positive empiricism. Rather, he was ‘aware that there exist factualities about the world and its penetrating principles that are *mind-independent*, but that those “facts” and principles, *however*, adopt different empirical meanings throughout history and cultures’ (Behr and Rösch, 2012: 33-34, emphasis in original). According to Behr and Kirke (2014: 28), Morgenthau, who was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States in his early thirties, was ‘trapped in linguistic complexities and their divergent cultural connotations’. Morgenthau’s usage of ‘objectivity’ in ‘Six Principles on Political Realism’ rests on the Nietzschean tradition of ‘an analysis based upon explicitly formulated conceptual distinctions in order to identify and analyse features and qualities of an object in question’. The misunderstanding, however, is not attributable to Morgenthau himself. On the contrary, as Rösch (2015: 99) notes, he tried to be as meticulous about his word choice as possible in his new environment.

If this is true, then Morgenthau’s works *had to* be misunderstood in order to become *the* IR theory during that period in the United States, despite his efforts. Here, what is at work is the involuntary decontextualisation and recontextualisation by multiple readers in a community in order to explain different objects. During the period of arms race, the reality was perceived as measurable, and therefore evident. On the other hand, recent developments in the diversification of power-structure (Buzan and Lawson, 2015) has let IR theorists realise the manifold reality indicated by Morgenthau’s oeuvre originally. Despite of the factual incongruity, these different understandings on the same text have nonetheless allowed readers in various situations to transcend time and gather under the banner of ‘realism’. To put it differently, because of its universal character, Morgenthau’s realism is usefully decontextualised and applied to a new context, engendering new interpretations. This universality points not to a fact, but to a malleable factuality subject to interpretation. Moreover, the misinterpretations are not conscious, but rather involuntary, and are therefore likely to be forgotten as the context evolves. For this reason, Morgenthau’s texts became not

of his own, but something that belonged to a society in need of constructing a reality at a particular time.

As Pierre Bourdieu (1991: 637) notes, here we can detect an ‘intricate relation between objective structures and subjective constructions, which is located beyond the usual alternatives of objectivism and subjectivism’. Realism *had* to be misread and simplified in order to become *the* theory of IR at that particular point of history. The theory has been prominent not because it had something innovative to offer, but because it provided suitable explanations for various phenomena for diverse groups of people living in various contexts, accounting for a ubiquitous actuality rather than transcendental truth. Likewise, the recent re-examinations of realism can be understood as a production of the time. In this way, a text can be interpreted differently. Any knowledge is incessantly revised when its subject and social circumstances transform. Hence, adding on to previous theories or ideas ‘does not happen as a so-called “additive synthesis”, but as an adjustment of the way of looking at a problem’ (Maruyama, 1978). Any interpretation contains both fallacy and veracity in varying degrees. Still, as Maruyama (1978) pointed out, this aspect in the history of thought tends to be neglected because of the researcher’s teleological motivation to search for an alternative and to attest the fallacy of a certain point of view in support of another point of view (see also Huysmans, 2002).

Thus, the nature of intellectual history indicates a fundamental impracticability of identifying the truth of knowledge. This point is particularly telling when knowledge travels in time and space. Since any theory is a product of a particular time and space configuration, realism, and in fact any critical theory, should be reconsidered anew (Agnew, 2009). Richard Devetak’s call for critical IR scholarship to take ‘a historical mode’ derives from this concern. The danger to which he calls attention is that critical scholarship could create another ahistorical tradition, as it is prone to giving ‘the impression that theory is the provenance of philosophy’ (Devetak, 2014: 418) often due to the researcher’s teleological view identified by Maruyama (1978), like how terms such as ‘real’ and ‘critical’ are difficult to define without ample contextualisation. To consider why people employed a specific path, we need to identify ‘historically located mode[s] of intellectual inquiry’ following David Livingstone (1995: 420). In doing so, we can excavate not only how concepts are created and developed, but ‘what has been lost from historical view’ (Devetak, 2014: 447).

In Terms of Space

As the term ‘international’ indicates, International Relations is a geographical product, although this fact has been much neglected in the discipline until recently (Buzan and Lawson, 2015). However, spatial contextuality is arguably more complex than temporal contextuality. Agnew (2007: 146) claims that knowledge, by circulating among communities globally, can ‘generate distinctive readings in different places thus creating different perspectives’. He further states that realism in IR was in the first place a traveling theory from Europe to North America accompanied by European émigré scholars like Morgenthau or Herz, before being reinterpreted locally by ‘more Americanized’ theorists such as Waltz and Gilpin. Conversely, whereas IR is certainly an American social science (Hoffman, 1977), it was established with a European origin (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 169). Armitage (2012: 22) calls attention to how knowledge travels, what kind of transaction it enables at a specific place, and how it is domesticated. However, because the ‘international’ in this modern context is historically confined within Europe and later refers to transatlantic relations, the geographicalisation of knowledge has been investigated with limited effort. In human geography, by contrast, the geography of knowledge has been subject to an intensive debate. What is important is that the focus on geography frees an enquirer from the fetters of interpretive correctness, as it gives a collective, rather than individual, account. This enables researchers to thoroughly reconsider the genesis of knowledge in world politics, by perceiving it as plural evolutions rather than a singular universal history and making an international thought literally *inter-national*. It also invites us to conduct micro-level analyses in addition to, not instead of, a macro-historical view.

Livingstone’s study (2005: 392, emphasis in original) focuses on this ‘significance of location in *hermeneutic* encounters’. Being interested in where and how scientific texts are read by locals, he emphasises the ‘fundamental instability in scientific meaning’ (ibid., 391). For him, knowledge is what is generated through moments of textual encounter which take place in specific spaces. Analysing how Darwin’s theory of evolution was differently translated in three distanced spaces, he sees the process as a knowledge circulation among collectives, in which there is no clear distinction between production and consumption, and therefore neither authenticity nor misreading. It is a ‘positioned conversation’ between texts and reader, not even between cultures strictly speaking, hence ‘located hermeneutics’ (ibid.: 395).

Oliver Ibert (2007) likewise sees the agency of a recipient as crucial, but further stresses its contingency and collectivity. Noting the elusiveness of the term ‘knowledge’, he suggests distinguishing between two theoretical perspectives: ‘the rationalistic approach’ of knowledge as ‘a factual object’ on the one hand, and ‘the performative concept of “knowing” in practice’ on the other (ibid., 104). Importantly, Ibert envisages the two as mutually constitutive. The premise underlying the former perspective is that knowledge is something knowable as an object. By contrast, the latter implies that knowledge ‘only becomes meaningful in relation to a distinct social practice’ (ibid., 105). Therefore, there is no absolute truth, only relational reality. Whilst the former is essentially individualistic and largely rational, the latter points towards the collective and therefore more often than not the irrational nature of knowing. Because of its embeddedness in social practice, Ibert argues, knowledge as action cannot be transferred at face value across time and space. Rather, ‘elements of knowledgeability derived from different practices or cultures only inconsistently fit together and partly may even rest on contradictory assumptions’ (ibid.: 106). To explain further, Ibert introduces the Polanyian separation of ‘tacit knowledge’ and ‘codified knowledge’. While codified knowledge, referred to as ‘public good’, is transferable, tacit knowledge, often existing ‘in the background of our consciousness’, sticks to a space where collective memories are contained and difficult to be shared with other collectives as far as there is no mutual trust between those collectives. What is crucial is that tacit knowing¹¹ is the necessary base of all knowledge. Hence, knowing means to discover ‘something pre-existing’, and is an on-going process (ibid., 105-106).

The performative conception of knowing (see also Thrift, 1999) is more often applied from the perspective of the recipient, while the rationalistic assumption of knowledge tends to be embraced by its putative author. In addition, there are a few methodological points to be considered. First, whereas the act of knowing plays an important role at the nascent stage of the process, the rational conception of knowledge is more suitable for analysing the later stage. This duality differs on the scale of analysis. Whereas an analysis of the performative aspect of knowing requires a micro-scale focus, that of the rationalistic aspect is observed in a meso- or macro-scale.

¹¹ According to Ibert (2007), Polanyi’s original wording is ‘knowing’, not ‘knowledge’, although nowadays ‘tacit knowledge’ is more widely referred.

Moreover, while knowing is essentially autopoietic¹² and simultaneously social (since it is launched automatically in a collective), the donor of knowledge is likely to see the development as a dialogical interaction over the object, because the knowledge is perceived as an already established fact. Finally, we need to anticipate cognitive voids between the knower and the putative author. Thus, the mutation of traveling theory can be appropriately observed only when the two aspects are fully taken into consideration.

Nonetheless, knowing as a verb is not just an issue for the learner. As Karl Mannheim (1985) argues, the social construction of knowledge has to be investigated in terms of ‘how thinking functions in public’ (ibid.: 1), since knowledge has to have rootedness ‘in the social texture’ of its recipient’s community. In this context, any knowledge production is an essentially emotive, intuitive, and unconscious process which he calls the ‘collective unconscious[ness]’. Knowledge, he contends, ‘is from the very beginning a co-operative process of group life, in which everyone unfolds his knowledge within the framework of common fate, a common activity, and the overcoming common difficulties’. It is essentially social because there exists a social nexus ‘in which every particular individual experience and perception in the group is nourished and developed’. Human thought develops not out of ‘a contemplative impulse’; it is instead ‘a volitional and emotional-unconscious undercurrent to assure the continuous operation for knowledge in group life’. Hence, any knowledge presupposes ‘the community of knowing’, which ‘grows primarily out of a community of experiencing prepared for in the subconscious’. This unconsciousness is ‘the irrational foundation of rational knowledge’ (ibid.: 29-33). Any knowledge essentially contains a collective unthought in itself, and no community is free from their own aesthetics (Bleiker, 2001). Therefore, the two perspectives are not simply mutually constitutive as Ibert (2007) has argued. Knowing as a verb is more fundamental than knowledge as a noun. This highlights the importance of space where the act takes place (Agnew, 2011). It indicates the productivity of knowledge dissemination particularly in terms of space, and simultaneously questions the uni-linear conception of knowledge evolution that presupposes the unequivocalness of its genesis.

¹² By the term ‘autopoiesis’ I mean ‘a recursive process where the system produces its own elements and integrates them in its own network’ (Arnoldi, 2006).

To sum up, time and space have respectively distinctive but mutually constitutive roles in this reciprocally expanding web of global knowledge production and dissemination. To streamline the argument, time largely endorses physical reasons for comprehending knowledge, whilst space automatically provides a foundation for the act of knowing. The act is embedded in geography. Whereas the former highlights chiefly the development of a continuous process that can generate transactions between donor and recipient, the latter primarily influences the nascent moment of the process of knowing for each actor, which is fundamentally collective, involuntary and autopoietic. In contrast to the former, which becomes a more relevant factor in an individualist account, the latter is indispensable to a collective account. Whereas the former can be analysed on meso- or macro-levels, the latter requires a micro and ethnographic approach. Finally, whilst the former is easier to discern, the latter is not. However, this elusiveness does not mean that the latter is only episodic. Instead, it is the latter that plays a principal role, which can generate grave influence to the whole process.

1.6. Conclusion

This chapter discussed what context means for traveling theory. In order to do so, it first identified the contradictory nature of political theory, the universality of which is supported by particularity. By considering the questions of interpretation, it highlighted the possible existence of a cognitive gap among analytical spaces that can be generated in the course of localisation of knowledge. As most notably represented in Walt Rostow's modernisation theory, Japan is considered the best student of Western learning. On the other hand, it has also been treated also as an abnormal (European) state. This chapter argued that in this contradictory appraisal of Japan, we can see the pluralistic character of knowledge dissemination, which becomes intelligible only by conceiving of the analytical space as plural.

Knowledge forms society, and vice versa. As it carries certain power within it, a knowledge has to be reinterpreted by its unique power structure when imported from a foreign society. Through the process, knowledge comes to contain a different spatiality. To examine this complex process, the present thesis employs assemblage thinking. As this chapter has shown, assemblage thinking enables the researcher to make a comprehensive, wholesale consideration of the intricate relations (rather than oppositions) between subject and object, sameness and difference, continuity and

change, and the local and the global, all of which undergo changes inter-spatially at the same time.

The chapter reviewed existing literature written in English on contextualisation. Different accounts of international intellectual history were examined in relation to historical contextualisation. Literature on the geography of knowledge was studied in connection with the spatial aspect. Whilst the historical aspect has been relatively well addressed as evidenced in the recent rise of classical realism in IR, how geographical difference affects the evolution of knowledge has been less often researched in comparison. Nonetheless, existing researches have demonstrated that spatial difference can possibly influence the process of knowing more significantly than temporal difference. More importantly, existing studies have highlighted that the impact of geographical difference can largely be considered as a product of the act of knowing in practice, and is therefore collective and performative, while historical difference can be largely analysed by an individualist-rationalistic account in which knowledge is understood as an object. These two aspects of knowing underscore the importance of micro and ethnographic analysis, which is however still significantly underdeveloped in Anglophone scholarship of both international intellectual history and geography of knowledge, with almost no empirical work focusing on the West/non-West nexus in this regard.

2 Inside the Territory of Knowledge

I cannot resist the thought that...instead of making ourselves slaves of the concepts of international law and morality, [if] we would confine these concepts to the unobtrusive, almost feminine, function of the gentle civilizer of national interest in which they find their true value...in our dealings with the peoples of the East,...posterity might look back upon our efforts with fewer and less troubled questions.

— George Kennan, ‘America and the Orient’
(1951: 53-54)

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consider how to make visible the cognitive gap behind the putative consent that facilitates the acceptance of theory. It argues that to unearth the cognitive gap, the analytical space has to be envisaged as spaces. This is important because in each space, traveling theory is interpreted differently in reference to each prior knowledge experiences, in which the value of theory is differently understood. This chapter investigates Japanese literature to develop an approach from within the community under investigation, by treating it as much a source of theoretical implications as an empirical resource (Jenco, 2007, 2012, 2015; Acharya, 2014). In doing so, it completes the theoretical mapping of the debate on traveling theory by linking the theoretical literature in the origin with that in the destination.

In critical geopolitics, the space between origin and destination is considered unified, as it asserts that foreign policy discourse is a boundary-making practice shaped by powerful states and has dominated world politics. In this perspective, political practice is assumed to be inter-culturally transmittable as theory migrates. It states that classical geopolitics is a ‘science’ that disseminates geo-power (Ó Tuathail, 1996b) among the Great Powers, subsequently forming the modern world politics of territorial states (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992; Agnew, 2003; see also Thrift, 2000; Dittmer and Gray, 2010). By contrast, this study argues that political theory travels among multiple spaces and not through a unified space. Even if a state employs a political theory of European origin, it does not mean that it follows its political practices as well. Instead, the theory is recontextualised and reproduced in the local

context, which can be very different from the original one in which the theory is born, even if the original is allowed to remain in some superficial ways. The process engenders the crucial cognitive gap. Therefore, connecting the two literatures by going beyond the division of the empirical and the theoretical is crucial to excavating the complex evolution of inter-regional traveling theory.

This chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section discusses the debate on international law so as to explicate a historical example of how a creative gap facilitated knowledge dissemination. This inquiry will also question the subject of a knowledge as well as the identity of the knowledge as an object. The second section introduces the concept of *basso ostinato* elaborated by the Japanese intellectual historian Maruyama Masao. Maruyama developed this concept in an effort to understand Japan's recurring historical 'misinterpretations' of exogenous political theories. Next, I recalibrate this concept in line with contemporary debates in our world today and introduce my own tuned version to frame the cognitive gap identified by Maruyama: the unsynthesisable. In the final section, studies by Japanese scholars are recontextualised into recent discussions in the English-speaking world on knowledge dissemination and Japan's entry into European international society.

2.2. International Law as 'Universal'

For Japanese intellectuals in the first half of the last century, the question of knowledge production and geography was already an enormous one. Under the Tokugawa Shogunate, Japan pursued a unique isolationist policy since the first half of the 1600s. In 1720, the government lifted the ban of importing foreign books, with the exception of Christian-related writings. Most of the books imported were then in Dutch, as the Shogunate kept a long relation with the Netherlands even during the nominal isolation. It was however only after the Meiji Restoration from the late 1860s that Japan began to import European books at a larger scale.¹ According to Maruyama and Kato (1998), there were many mistranslations, some of which were primarily due to insufficient language skills. One interesting example is the book *Social Statics* by Herbert Spencer, published under the title *Shakai Heikenron* which can be understood as 'on the right to live in peace'. It was this unintentionally twisted title that made it a best-selling

¹ There are some notable tendencies in these publications. First, many of these books discussed historical topics. Second, some books on politics, for example those by John Hobbes and Edmund Burke, were translated by the government (Maruyama and Kato, 1998).

book among the activists of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement in the Taisho Period (Maruyama and Kato, 1998: 111). It is no surprise that many of the key ideas in European social theory did not exist in the Japanese language. To give a specific example, Fukuzawa Yukichi, the most influential Enlightenment thinker, translated 'society' as '*ningen kōsai* (relationship among humans)' (Kimura, 2009), which was replaced by another translation later. Put simply, improper, idiomatic and even arbitrary translations were commonly found (see Maruyama, 1986: 42).

In the process, however, people started to doubt the rapid assimilation of knowledge. In the resulting debates, Japanese scholars particularly focused on the role of geography and that of the everyday (Nishida, 1926: Tosaka, 1977[1935]). Recent contributions have started to examine how the notion of international law has been disseminated globally (cf. Armitage, 2012: 28), but such investigation has been done in a Japanese context by Yoshino Sakuzō in 1927. Analysing the political self-realisation of Japanese people when the country became a modern nation-state in the late nineteenth century,² he stated that what fuelled the Japanese people's political consciousness was a notion of universal law (*kōhō*), which was both based on the Confucian '*dō*' (way)³ and linked to the concept of international law. This sudden awakening was indubitably phenomenal, given the long peace the country had enjoyed since the establishment of the Edo Shogunate at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The concept of international law was officially introduced into Japan in November 1857 by Townsend Harris, the first United States Consul General, in order to persuade Japan to enter an unequal trade treaty. Around the same time, Henry Wheaton's book, *Elements of International Law* (1836), was translated into Japanese in 1865 through a Chinese translation published a year earlier.⁴ The 'international law' *qua* universal law, being read in the context of the Confucian tradition, came to be understood by Japanese people as a 'metaphysical entity' to rule the world.⁵ Yoshino (1927) stated that not only politicians but literally everyone came to enthusiastically use the term in everyday language. Thanks in no small part to this fascination, not only Tokugawa

² According to Yoshino (1927: 419), they 'all of a sudden' recognised that 'politics was our job'.

³ In Chinese, the pronunciation is *tao*. The word itself signifies 'way' or 'path'. As a concept, it loosely means 'nature', 'principle', 'truth', and so on.

⁴ This first Chinese version was not a literal translation, but a free translation based on Wheaton's original book (Shū, 2011).

⁵ Confucianism was employed by the Edo Shogunate as a principle for governing the people.

Shogunate but also the new government which tried to oust foreigners from the country dramatically changed their attitude as the opening of the country was now enforced. Indeed, in order to legitimise this significant policy u-turn, the new government conversely relied on this notion of international law *qua dō* (Yoshino, 1927). Hence, *dō* and its power was abused not only by the Americans, but also by Japanese government officials and people attaining a paradoxical and episodic but broad discursive coalition (Hajer, 1995), which was however not recognised as such among the actors.

This is not to argue that the government accepted the concept of international law because they misunderstood it. On the contrary, Yoshino pointed out that international law was widely studied by Japanese scholars and understood as meticulously as possible among the policy circles. Nevertheless, he stressed, it was the pragmatist understanding of international affairs among Japanese people, rather than the scholarly effort, that aroused a curious fascination. In other words, what actually supported the formal acceptance of the concept was a popular sensation caused by the apparent misunderstanding. Yoshino (1927) stated that no Japanese at that time believed that states could have peaceful relations. China and Great Britain fought the First Opium War (1839-1842) and Japan witnessed the devastating results this war had brought to China. Even though the American officials explained to their Japanese counterparts the tragedy of China as a corollary of the latter's reluctance to follow those laws, they were well aware that the claims of equality and universality were but superficial and limited (Suzuki, 2011; Buzan, 2012). Moreover, following Maruyama and Kato (1998), in the Chinese translation of Wheaton's book, the phrase 'all civilised nations' was translated as 'all Christian nations' (see also Suzuki, 2011: 20).⁶ This could have discouraged the widespread acceptance of this notion as Christianity had been banned for centuries in Japan. According to Yoshino (1927), Japan during the Edo Period perceived the West as 'barbaric' (*yi*) following the Chinese centripetal world order. Indeed, for these reasons, studies on European law and politics were delayed compared to other disciplines (Yoshino, 1927: 431-433). These facts illustrate that Japanese people were neither simply attracted to the superiority of Western culture, nor awed by it (see also Aydin, 2007: 25; Suzuki, 2011).

⁶ This was because William Martin, the translator of the first Chinese version of Wheaton's work, was a missionary, and he translated the book in an effort to spread Christian teachings to Chinese people. Sato also mentions that the work was supported by US government officials (Satō, 1977).

This notwithstanding, Yoshino's account did not provide a sufficient explanation to the reasons the Japanese became fascinated by the idea. Instead, he made an interesting comparison between Japan and China. He pointed out that the acceptance was not observed in China, despite the fact that the notion of *dō* originated from a Chinese context. He concluded that it was a contingent encounter that gave the Japanese the unusual passion for the political movement, pointing out how the public notion of *bankoku kōhō*, a translation of 'international law' during the period,⁷ was far-fetched from how international law was understood in Yoshino's era (see also Maruyama, 1949). Nonetheless, the miscomprehension in the popular imagination undeniably helped Japan accept the notion both in name and in reality. Accordingly, the state 'entered' the Western international society ahead of China.⁸

Yoshino's work gives us an important insight into how knowledge travels globally; knowledge and power do not travel hand in hand necessarily, and it is indigenous interpretation that endows knowledge with power. Moreover, indigenous interpretation questions the identity of the object of knowledge. Knowledge needs an indigenous receptor to be accepted in an exotic space; hence what is important is how knowledge is understood, instead of what it is. Content here seems to be neglected not because it is unimportant, but because the idea itself is automatically replaced by an indigenous idea. Put bluntly, knowledge has to be misunderstood for it to be accepted. In this case, international law was replaced by *dō*, and it was an essential step for the ultimate appropriation. The process generated a cognitive void which ironically facilitated the understanding of knowledge. However, the adaptation was later forgotten since it was involuntary. The role of the receptor and the void in global knowledge dissemination—only vaguely detected by Yoshino—was further clarified by another Japanese scholar almost forty years younger than him: Maruyama Masao.

2.3. *Basso Ostinato*:⁹ A Question of Power and Subjectivity

For Maruyama, who began his academic career in the late 1930s, this cognitive gap was perceived as an imminent problem for Japan to develop as a 'normal' modern

⁷ It was later re-translated as *kokusai hō*.

⁸ According to Aydin (2007: 26), Japanese intellectuals also translated 'civilisation' using a Confucian term.

⁹ In Japan, this concept is better known as *kosō* (old layers). However, the present thesis employs the term *basso ostinato* as it conveys the idea and nuance of the concept best as Maruyama (1984) himself has claimed.

state rather than a curious object of research. Japan tried to establish an ‘independence of national awareness’ in the Taisho Period (1912-1926)¹⁰, during which Yoshino spent most of his academic career (Mitani, 1974: 7). By contrast, in the Showa Period which began in 1926, Japan experienced an ‘identity crisis’ as a result of three wars—the First Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, and the First World War—and the resulting economic depression despite having won all these wars. As a consequence of this social confusion, German sociology of knowledge became a popular field of study in the 1930s and 1940s because it was hoped that it could help explain the meaning of Japan’s rapid assimilation of knowledge so as to transcend the cultural crisis that affected Japan.

In Japan in the late 1930s to 1940s, modernity, which in turn came to be seen as tantamount to the West, was seen as a remarkable ideology. Intense intellectual debates followed in order to ‘overcome modernity’ (Nishitani et al. 1979[1942]), which continued throughout the Second World War and has been repeatedly revived ever since. As the Pacific War escalated, overcoming modernity came to mean going back to Japan’s own traditions, resulting in a powerful revisionist movement. This divided intellectuals into two opposing camps. Maruyama was one of those scholars who were critical of this movement. Employing Karl Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge method, Maruyama attempted to uncover what Mannheim called ‘aspect-structure (*Aspectstruktur*)’¹¹ in Japan. There has to be ‘something’ (Maruyama, 1984) that generates ‘multi-productive misunderstanding’ (Maruyama, 1960) in the process of cross-regional knowledge transfer. By elaborating on aspect-structure, Maruyama approached what I call the *unsynthesisable* cognitive void (see below for more on the *unsynthesisable*).

With *basso ostinato*, a concept inspired by Mannheim’s ‘thought-style’, Maruyama argued that any political thought in Japan, be it Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Liberalism, and Marxism, originated from a foreign context. If the imported thoughts are carefully analysed, a certain subtle mutation that is never fully integrated into the original is detected. *Basso ostinato* is a specific ‘pattern of thinking’ that subtly changes the original. These ideologies were gradually and almost unconsciously

¹⁰ Modern Japanese era names (*nengō*) are Taisho (1912-1926), Showa (1926-1989), and Heisei (1989-), respectively.

¹¹ This term is translated as ‘perspective’ in the English edition (Mannheim, 1985). By contrast, for Maruyama, who read most of Mannheim’s work in German, it is understood as an aspect as a result of a constitutive penetration of his social standpoint into his thinking (Maruyama, 1978: 334).

Japanised as if underlying bass notes slightly makes melody listened differently (Maruyama, 1972, 1976b, 1979, 1984, 1985, 1988). This ‘unconscious consciousness’, to paraphrase Mannheim (1985), is tacitly shared in a largely geographically defined community. Thus, any imported political idea retains an imperceptible otherness, as heterogeneous ideas evolve alongside each other and cannot be fully integrated (Maruyama, 1972). *Basso ostinato* helps scholars identify the crucial cognitive gap that arises in the process of knowledge transfer implied in Yoshino’s study. On the other hand, however, it remained as a difficult concept to grasp, and has been harshly criticised as deterministic and regressive (cf. Koyasu, 1986; Kan, 1999; Yamaguchi, 2000; Kimura, 2014), perhaps because it took spatiality into consideration seriously. However, as I will demonstrate later, it was criticised because, it nailed down the kernel of intellectual history in Japan, particularly in terms of appropriation of foreign knowledge.

To get a more nuanced picture of this concept, we must consider Maruyama’s borrowing of this term from musicology. As a musical term, *basso ostinato* connotes ‘a recurrent pattern of bass notes’ which is ‘an underlying motif that is independent from the treble part and, if the main theme appears in the treble part, is bound to undergo some modifications’ (Maruyama, 1988: 27). His intention was to trace *basso ostinato* from three fields: history, politics, and ethics (Maruyama, 1976b: 178-179). However, his ambitions remained unfinished, as he did not complete the latter two. Still, he managed to identify three pivotal terms in history: ‘become’ (*naru*), ‘next’ (*tsugi*), and ‘momentum’ (*ikioi*). In terms of ethical consciousness, he focused on a pair of binary concepts—pure mind (*kiyoki kokoro*) and dirty mind (*kitanaki kokoro*)—and extracted a series of concepts related to governmental affairs (*matsurigoto*) for politics. Having listed them for a better understanding, however, it suffices to note that *basso ostinato* identifies ‘something’ in everyday life that subtly and unconsciously localises knowledge in order for it to be accepted in a foreign community. As will be further explored later, his attempts to reify *basso ostinato* as textual form ended up in failure.

During the interwar period, Japanese scholarship heavily debated whether world history could be conceived as a singular or plural process. This was of importance as the former would imply acknowledgment of Western superiority. In fact, many scholars began to argue for the latter due to the need to justify the anticipated Second World War. Until then, the Japanese government had been aiming to escape from Asia

in its effort to avoid colonisation, and in doing so had become part of the ‘civilised’ world as Fukuzawa Yukichi (1933) famously maintained. Thereby, Japanese intellectuals embraced a ‘pluralistic Eurocentric institutionalism’ as outlined by Martin Hall and John Hobson (2010: 217-218), meaning that they acted as a wilful follower of the West by affirming the (Western) universality of its political trajectory to establish a modern nation-state.

In the attempt to turn Japan into a European state, Japanese people believed that their state had gained the status of a great power after defeating Russia in 1905, but soon thereafter they came to realise that Western states were not going to accept Japan on equal ground. Becoming suspicious of Western claims of universalism, Japanese politicians and scholars began to emphasise their nation’s historical uniqueness as well as superiority, and saw a necessity in overcoming modernity as an equivalent to the West (Maruyama, 1974: xxx). Although Japanese historiography still often neglects this point, the dominant discourse during the first half of the twentieth century asserted that world history had to be conceived in plurality (cf. Nishida, 1982[1940]; Kōyama, 1940; Shimizu, 2015). Within this discourse, it was insisted that there is not one world history, but many world histories. This rhetoric, helping Japanese intellectuals argue for equality and later even superiority over the West, served as a justification for pursuing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and eventually ideologised the entire Japanese society, regardless of political inclination (Tosaka, 1935; Takeuchi, 1959; Maruyama, 1961; Samuels, 2007).

Two Syntheses

Maruyama critically reflected on this ‘overcoming modernity’ debate via intellectual history. He was puzzled at the fact that, despite the importation of Western nationalism, Japan had developed into a different type of modern nation-state, and he assessed this problem in terms of political subjectivity. Despite Japan’s claim of being a modern democratic state with a constitutional monarchy, the actual political situation was far from it, as the ‘formation of free subjects (*jiyu naru shutai*)’ (Maruyama, 1964: 20) was hampered through the aspect-structure of the *kokutai*,¹² eventually leading to the abolishment of the political sphere altogether. The *kokutai* argued that the Emperor

¹² This term has been translated as national polity. Though controversial, during the first half of the last century, it was understood as a synonym of the Emperor family’s rule which was thought to have persisted from the beginning of the country’s establishment in 660 BC.

is a direct descendant of the sun-goddess Amaterasu, and this divine ancestry put the Japanese emperor at the centre of a hierarchical society based around concentric circles. This discouraged the public from critically questioning political decisions. By *a priori* determining the Emperor's rule as virtuous, Maruyama argued, 'a system of irresponsibility' was established, which allowed Japanese rulers to justify their political decisions as elements of inevitable, pre-determined historical processes (Maruyama, 1964, 1969). As a consequence, 'societal intolerance' (Maruyama, 1971: 16) existed in Japan towards dissenting voices, eventually rendering the country internally inclusive but externally 'closed' (Maruyama, 1959: 196).

It was this discomfort with the depoliticisation of Japanese society that encouraged Maruyama to work on the investigation of cross-regional intellectual history, which started as a series of studies on Edo Confucianism. In addition, he had an 'extra-academic motive' (Maruyama, 1974: xxxii). Strongly objecting to the dominant discourses of overcoming modernity *qua* the West, he was eager to demonstrate the universality of human history by stressing Japan's contribution to it. During the period, a Marxist conceptualisation of uni-linear history dominated Japanese intellectual climate. In this conceptualisation, he tried to elucidate the process of Confucianism's internal collapse, which had provided Tokugawa Japan with its most salient source of social cohesiveness, as the advent of modernity. These two motives can be translated into two syntheses, which Maruyama tried to accomplish in his work. The first synthesis, corresponding to the former motive, was a methodological task. Maruyama's (1978: 334) ambition was to investigate 'how to synthesise the internal continuity within the category of thinking and the consecutive transformation of meaning within the same category'. For him, continuity appeared to be what played a crucial role in this transformation. Given Japan's exceptional homogeneity, its modern intellectual history was a demonstration of this paradox. The latter aspiration aimed to synthesise foreign theory and local practice. By determining the *kokutai* as aspect-structure, he aimed to uncover a more comprehensive picture of modernity in the history of human progress. In doing so, he tried to attest that Western political theory was still applicable to Japan. Initially he had hoped that Mannheim's methodology, specifically the concepts of aspect-structure and conditionality of knowledge, would provide an epistemological tool to simultaneously establish the two syntheses.

An Awareness towards Plurality

Nevertheless, his hope proved to be ill-founded in the end. Instead, Maruyama discovered a site of ‘multi-productive misunderstanding’ (Maruyama, 1960) where an idea becomes meaningful through textual appraisal by the locals. At this site, comprehensions of the same idea are never fully integrated but remain different among multiple actors below the level of consciousness. With this site of creation, he was compelled to change his concept of modernity from that in singular to that in plural. Eager to argue for a universal history, Maruyama was caught by the seemingly different natures of political power among cultures, which he primarily recognised as the difference between Japan and China. Despite the fact that Japan had borrowed its political system from China, power in Japanese politics actually diverged from the Chinese understanding (Maruyama, 1974). At first glance, the Meiji Restoration replaced the Chinese-inspired traditional political system with the Western modern state-system. However, Maruyama’s finding indicated the other way round: the unchanged power structure implied that the imported system was internally converted by the existing indigenous system. As he dug deeper, Maruyama gradually became aware that despite the ostensibly radical systemic transformations, the essential power structure in Japan had remained almost unchanged. In other words, institutional transformations did not connote a structural change. Rather, foreign ideas were substantially replaced by Japanese ideas in the course of nominal transformations. In his earlier work on Edo Confucianism, published during the Second World War, Maruyama did not study the difference between Japan and China seriously (Maruyama, 1952, 1974). This proved to be a crucial mistake (Maruyama, 1974) because the internal alterations might be repetitive in nature but unrecognisable in superficial analyses. In other words, Chinese ideas, like European knowledge, were already replaced by indigenous ideas at the core in the course of importation. Yet questions remain: How were the transubstantiations actualised? Could political power in an allegedly identical political system be different when transplanted into a foreign society? Again, these questions draw links to Yoshino’s study on the different appreciations of the concept of international law between China and Japan.

Tsuda Sokichi’s study (1938) on Japanese importation of Chinese thought, which could be traced back to the seventh century, gave us clues to this conundrum. He argued that due to inadequate language proficiency, the Japanese paradoxically developed what might be called a textualism, which accepted foreign texts at face

value. However, this does not at all indicate that they valued the literal meaning of the texts based on a strict interpretation. On the contrary, it was the fundamental lack of language proficiency that made them value the original text in their own reading. From Tsuda's study, two notable traditions of Japanese textualism can be identified.

First, it cultivated a unique symbolism, as the learners were prone to gain rather fragmentary knowledge than thought *in toto*. This tendency was enhanced by Chinese ideograms, also imported into Japan. At the same time, a paucity of linguistic skill was likely to be compensated by analogical reasoning in reference to what they had already known. Tsuda argued that the Confucian tradition *per se* contributed to reinforcing this disposition. Because its *raison d'être* was to justify the reign of the Chinese Emperor, Confucianism was largely philological, practical, and hence, fragmentary, in which various, even contested, concepts were connected by association.

Second, setting aside the question of accuracy, learning itself was valued more than further critical examining and thinking. Accordingly, the gap widened between intellectuals who read foreign texts and ordinary people who did not read them. These tendencies formed an overall inclination of Japanese intellectual culture, in which knowledge lost touch with quotidian life, and which had led the Japanese to paradoxically rebel against the authority of knowledge, be it China, their own government, or the West, over the course of history repeatedly. Tsuda concluded his study with the remark that it was not until Japan started to import Western knowledge in the eighteenth and nineteenth century that its people began to doubt the contradiction between their everyday politics and Confucianism (Tsuda, 1933). Therefore, the Confucianism in Japan had already been transformed throughout the long process of interpretation. The gap between theory and practice was rarely acknowledged, however; the theory was blindly worshiped despite the mutation.

The experience of a group of medical doctors who translated a Dutch book, itself a translation of a German book, in the late eighteenth century endorsed Tsuda's arguments. The experience was later published during the Meiji Restoration under the title *Rangaku Kotohajime (Launching Western Learning)* (Sugita, 1890). Until then, medical knowledge in Japan came predominantly from China. The doctors did not speak Dutch when they acquired the book, so they had to confirm the book's information on the anatomy of the human body by comparing the figures in the book with a corpse they obtained from an execution ground near Edo (Tokyo) and dissected. Since the anatomical charts in the book were significantly different from their

conventional expertise, they were ‘astonished’ with the accuracy of European knowledge as the charts in the Dutch book ‘had no mistake’. This sensational experience made them regret their lack of medical expertise in the human body, and they decided to translate the whole book into Japanese, despite their linguistic inability. In the early stage of the project, they could only work on one short sentence ‘from dawn to dusk’. The whole enterprise, which took four years, was like ‘a boat without helm sailing in the ocean’ (Sugita, 1890: 33). Nevertheless, they concluded, it was such an intensive experience, and the ‘will of heaven’ was what enabled them to complete the translation (ibid.: 39). Here, a few commonalities can be observed between the three stories of international law, of Japanese textualism, and of the medical doctors. First, the act of knowing is primarily a closed procedure involving the locals. Second, in the consciousness of the recipients there was a curious absence of the authors of knowledge. Instead, something like the ‘will of heaven’ was adored. Third, and consequently, there existed an analogous mode of power, which can be described as ‘power to’ as it had no possessor and could serve everyone.

Maruyama (1961: 12-15) termed this particular power structure in Japan ‘unstructured tradition’. He argued that this unique tradition developed in Japan as a result of tireless importations of different traditions of thought, in which people did not consider the gap between theory and practice. It was in this unstructured structure that imported knowledge was modified to an extent that could no longer be equated to the original through constant classification, interpretation and re-interpretation in terms of what was familiar to the locals instead of what was correct. For Maruyama, it was this vacuum of unconsciousness that assisted Japanese people to continuously miscomprehend foreign knowledge. The resulting gap widened as the misunderstood knowledge was abstracted from social science discourses (Maruyama, 1971: 68) which were supposed to be applicable to other contexts. This way, knowledge was adjusted to fit a different epistemological tradition, and in the process, the object of knowledge in fact switched to an analogous but substantially different indigenous idea. Hence, the various cognitions, which developed in different social contexts, could not be presumed as parts of the same entity; the assumed cognitive object and the cognitions did not hold a one-on-one relation, even if a cursory assessment initially indicated so. What played a crucial role in this subtle mutation in the process of assimilating foreign knowledge was not only an ‘adjustment of the way of looking at a problem’ (Maruyama, 1978), but also a different power structure.

Analysing foreign theories from within the Japanese history of thought, Maruyama gradually became convinced that the failed emergence of free subjects in Japan was a fundamental structural issue rooted in everyday practices and experiences, and not only a question of perspective and conditionality of knowledge (see also Watsuji, 2011 [1952]). Some may dispute whether this ‘unstructured structure’ is exclusively Japanese, since it is increasingly a common practice in the globalised world to apply a new context to knowledge exchange as well as abstraction in scientific procedure. This point will be addressed in the next section. Contrary to Maruyama’s earlier wartime conviction, then, modernity has to be reconsidered as *modernities*. Knowledge can only turn into power after it is localised within a unique local structure. Therefore, theory and practice cannot be synthesised inter-regionally, but only in the void between different practices. This void is where the capacity to accept a theory lies. Thus, the same knowledge cannot be equated to the original once it is imported to a foreign community. Maruyama (1978: 131) argued that the methodology of geopolitics in particular allows the geopolitical and geohistorical conditionalities of the society under scrutiny to be calibrated. These contingent encounters between foreign knowledge and local practice are spatial and repetitive in function, since the emergence of the intersection is considered to be deeply rooted in everyday practices. Hence, such practices composing *basso ostinato* are historically formed under a specific spatio-temporal condition (Maruyama, 1972, 1976b). With this concept, Maruyama tried to capture the site of creation where repeated nodes take place in constant flux. At this site, foreign knowledge gradually affects and is affected by local knowledge, thereby becoming embedded in a new geographical location. Once knowledge is attached to its new location, it develops into a new form irrespective of its origin. However, the two forms of knowledge—local and foreign—never amalgamate; they only synchronise at the site like how the main theme and the hardly-noticeable bass notes chime with each other in a piece of music.

An Inconclusive Concept?

Still, however, the exact meaning of *basso ostinato* remains irrefutably obscure. According to Maruyama, it refers to a ‘pattern of thinking and description’ (Maruyama, 1992: 295) that a community of experience has historically nurtured while continuously incorporating foreign knowledge. For him, this pattern was what caused Japanese people to repeatedly mistranslate foreign ideas. *Basso ostinato*

indicates a spatial and therefore popular dimension of aspect-structure. This dimension carries a repetitive and obstinate orientation since it belongs to the unconscious everyday realm, but it also contains transformative possibilities as geographical and social conditions change. It is not an ideology, because it can unite diverse traditions of thought in Japan.

Defining his task as ‘finding a clue to enquiring the style of thought that has been relentlessly streaming under the various modes of historical consciousness down to the modern era’, Maruyama (1972: 295-298) examined some of Japan’s oldest texts dating back to the eighth and ninth centuries, and extracted the banal terms mentioned at the beginning of this section as key words in order to identify the ‘category as substratum’. This approach was a ‘sort of circular argument’ because he had already identified the bass notes in contemporary discourses *a priori* before projecting them into the past (Maruyama, 1972: 298). Clearly, a danger exists in this approach. In addition to the difficulty of unearthing something belonging to the unconscious realm, any attempt to reify this ‘something’ or ‘somethings’ in textual form may create stereotypes and hence be criticised as historical and geographical determinism. As Charls Taylor (in Thrift, 1996: 9) argues, ‘to situate our understanding in practice is to see it as implicit in our activity’. Pinning down this implicitness can result in mistreating subjects (and objects) — the result of a discourses—as a producer of discourses (Müller, 2008). Consequently, ‘the role of language in shaping experience’ (Nelson, 1992) is eliminated. The process can breed stereotypes by mistaking it as reality (Bhabha, 1983: 23).

Maruyama anticipated these accusations, and had a response to them. He argued that Japan’s ‘exceptional homogeneity’ was based on its unique geography, but these conditions do not make the motif stable. Rather, the motif was bound to change since the conditions were continuously transforming (Maruyama, 1996c). Having said that, he extracted the terms from the old texts. However, the terms did not help us to understand *basso ostinato* better. On the contrary, the motif itself contained a danger of justifying Japan’s perpetual uniqueness as a state by making the subject the producer of discourse. This perhaps was what wartime propagandist did (Koyasu, 1986). For these reasons, despite Maruyama’s exceptional reputation, *basso ostinato* remains a difficult concept to date, being employed by only a few scholars.

2.4. The Unsynthesisable and Modes of Power

To recapitulate, the creative cognitive gap initially hinted by Yoshino was more intensively scrutinised by the musicological concept of *basso ostinato* as ‘something’ that generates the gap (Maruyama, 1984). In order to employ this concept in my own framework, this ‘something’ however must be more succinctly explained and must eschew the danger of determinism. In what follows, I argue that *basso ostinato* is better conceived as a manifestation of everyday relations in a geographically defined community. It identifies both the power relations in a particular society in which subjects are articulated, as well as the law which they are subject to. The relations are formed through experiences in ‘our relation to nature, other human beings and the self’ (Huysmans, 1998: 228). *Basso ostinato* is important because, supporting a particular mode of power, it can change the substantial mechanics of an established system, albeit without changing the components of the system *per se* (Qin, 2016: 12). Therefore, it can change the whole structure of an imported concept without being noticed, rendering the adaptation merely nominal. In order to detect this hidden inflection, however, the concept must be employed as a heuristic device that ‘allows us to see how ideas located in different times and regions diverge from the style of thought we have created on the basis of materials drawn from a particular time and space’ and not as a hypothesis (Nelson, 1992: 38-40). This is similar to how Friedrichs and Kratochwil (2009) call abduction as a pragmatic research strategy.

Two Insights

Based on the discussion above, I identify two crucial insights the concept of *basso ostinato* brought to Maruyama. First, when intellectual history is understood with a thorough contextualisation, it dissolves the either-or question between ‘true’ and ‘false’ consciousness, and accordingly enables a researcher to focus on the difference itself, rather than the validity of interpretation. Any standpoint, being constrained by each conditionality of knowledge, projects as well as distorts reality to actualise a subjectivity. Even if different standpoints seemingly refer to and explain an analogous object, there is always the possibility that they are pointing to factually different objects. When the question of truth is thus abandoned, it becomes possible to consider each misunderstanding in a more productive way by conceiving of knowledge as ‘knowledges’ (Thrift, 1999: 303). As Mannheim (1985: 168) remarks, ‘a *Weltanschauung* [worldview] is not of necessity a source of error, but often gives

access to spheres of knowledge otherwise closed' (cf. Massey, 1999: 285). To be accepted in a foreign territory, knowledge requires a receptor which has its own history. By finding a place for acceptance, knowledge begins its unique development in a new space. The product of the knowing process may look identical to the original, but in practice it contains an unsynthesisable cognitive void. This highlights the neglected role of space in the act of knowing, while simultaneously denying a linear developmental model of intellectual history in the inter-regional context.

As for the second insight, provided that it is the cognitive void that enables the assimilation of foreign knowledge, the void must also be the site where people develop their subjectivity. Hence, the void is a necessary condition of appropriation. It was a bewildering conclusion for Maruyama, who had intended to reduce the mistranslation of foreign knowledge. Having the aspiration for the second synthesis in mind, his research has, from the beginning, held a politicised assumption (cf. Huysmans, 2002: 43). Thus, his orientation contained the evident danger of altering the analytical device for a teleological reasoning, accordingly restraining him to get more into the issue of space. Maruyama believed that it was aspect-structure, represented as *kokutai* in Japanese society, that hampered the correct comprehension of imported thoughts, consequently impeding the formation of free subjects in Japan. In order to expose the falsity of *kokutai*, he chose to elaborate on *basso ostinato*. However, as Huysmans (2002: 51) points out, theorisation is 'the performative work of language and its generic dimension is embedded in "underlying" social processes that could explain the specific ways in which security language arranges social relations in contemporary societies'. Therefore, the first question of analysis must be a 'heuristic one of how to understand what is happening' (Huysmans, 2002: 52), since the theory, because of its embeddedness, cannot establish the falsity. Maruyama's observation indicated that it was *kokutai* that generated the inchoate (mis)understanding which in turn facilitated the whole process of comprehension of the unknown knowledge. Thus, it was this falsity that had enabled Japan to establish its subjectivity as the first non-Western modern nation-state, allowing the country to join an allegedly universal history. It was this very indigenous idea, which is *kokutai*, that helped empower and politicise Japanese people, allowing them to imagine their nation as part of the globe.

Therefore, no foreign knowledge can be understood completely, and it is only accepted when it has gained a meaning in reference to already existing ideas and the indigenous power structure. In Japan's case, it was the feudalistic and pre-modern idea

of *kokutai* that underpinned the concept of the modern state. Thus, on the one hand, Maruyama's second synthesis—of universal theory and local practice—proved to be a failure. Rather, Japan's experience implied that knowledge can only be appropriately localised by a radical but automatic adjustment. On the other hand, it was the first synthesis—of continuity and change in the analysis of intellectual history—that could be explained by *basso ostinato*. It was *kokutai* that provided the basis for the (mis)comprehension of foreign knowledge which paradoxically could induce social transformations. Thus, knowledge can be activated in the entangled relations that is 'as much internal as they are external' (Allen, 2012). The subjects that appropriate the knowledge are not what is called an autonomous subject, because the relations are essentially uncontrollable for the subject herself. Rather, it automatically defines the law the subjectivity follows. The assemblage is not only made up of this internality, but rather an internality *in relation to* externality; the linkage between internality and externality is actualised in the unsynthesisable cognitive void albeit in an unnoticeable way.

Through a thorough contextualisation with a special focus on space, Maruyama scrutinised the process as a collective and active affair that was however largely governed by an unconscious realm. War induces a collective fascination which unites a community and eradicates ideological differences. For Maruyama, this unification in the context of Japan evidently indicated the miscomprehension of Western ideas. Eager to rectify this mistake, however, he was haunted by the cognitive void. His lifelong aspiration for cosmopolitanism and modernism, and for establishing a 'healthy' political subjectivity in Japan, led him to a bewildering conclusion. Despite the fact that this gap rests on irreconcilability, it links local people to a putatively universal theory. At the same time, it is from this incongruence that the condition of possibility to accept the knowledge emerges for the locals. In this way, knowledge is diffused globally while engulfing differences superficially.

Thus, foreign knowledge gains a universal character as it is linked to the local in an incongruous way. The unification is a product of multiple relations, but has 'an emergent "thingness"' (Allen, 2012). Knowledge is decontextualised and recontextualised across diverse social and cultural situations which actualise assemblages (Collier and Ong, 2005). *Basso ostinato* indicates that this linkage can be attained because it does not negotiate about the contents; rather, the contents link up various ways of thinking. The system can become different not because the

components are replaced, but because the system is read differently. For these reasons, the conversion is not visible especially from the outside, feigning a superficial integration. Even after a deepened mutual understanding, this cognitive gap can still remain as a void due to its autopoietic character. This is what I call the unsynthesisable.

This partly explains why the modern state system in Japan has helped restore monarchy, which contains feudalistic elements. This is not to argue that an exotic theory conveniently justified the rule of the Emperor as a power-holder. Rather, I argue that the theory of the nation-state, which is of foreign origin, made sense in Japan as the power in the concept was translated through the local mode of political power most remarkably represented by the Emperor system.¹³ This obviously does not mean that the power of the Emperor was actually modern. What is crucial here is not the power of the Emperor *per se*, but a particular mode of power *represented by* the Emperor. Evidently, the power the Japanese read in the concept of the modern state was not analogous to the power of that in Europe. Likewise, in the example of international law, the morphed power by the Japanese did not imply the Emperor *per se*, but pointed to something that was ubiquitous and could potentially serve for everyone *like the power of Emperor did*. Relying on Watsuji Tetsurō (1948), the power of the Emperor was mostly understood as ‘the symbol of [a] nation’s consensus’ even throughout the reign of the *samurai*, which was fairly different from the master-servant relationship in *bushidō*.¹⁴ In this context, the Emperor was the manifestation of the dynamic that people experienced mundanely. The Emperor came to be the signifier of the modern state power without any contradiction, as Japanese people comprehended the unknown in reference to the known. In this particular power structure, who held the power was not really important. What played a remarkable role was the local mode of power during the conversion of knowledge.

Japan, where a homogeneous way of thinking has been developed in this geographically confined community, underwent a drastic transformation induced by

¹³ When the Meiji Government brought back the Emperor to the throne, their intention was that his existence could become a lynchpin of society, which, according to Ito Hirofumi’s understanding, is analogous to Christianity and not to constitutional monarchy (Kenpō Chōsakai Jimukyoku, 2003). However, the understanding of *kokutai* was not monolithic. For example, Fukuzawa (1875[1995]) argued that *kokutai* simply meant the independence of the state.

¹⁴ Ishii (2011) argues that the most remarkable tradition of Japan’s emperor system is that historically the emperor rarely rules directly (*Fushinsei*) and that for this reason the system has sustained almost 1800 years.

foreign knowledge, because the people creatively interpreted the knowledge in relation to their everyday practices and environment. It was the entangled relation between the internal and the external, actualised in the unsynthesisable cognitive void, that generated knowledge conversion. An exotic knowledge can be localised when it is understood in reference to the local modality of power.

2.5. Recent Debates and *Basso Ostinato*

The contribution of *basso ostinato* is that it unearths this multiplicity of space. When it is used as a Weberian ideal type (Nelson, 1992), transversal dissemination of knowledge can be analysed more succinctly. The concept is comprehensive because it focuses on people's everyday practices which form a site-specific mode of power. It is a concept of assemblage thinking. However, as Maruyama (1978) later admitted, he had reservations on getting deeper into the issue of space, despite the fact that it was an inevitable corollary as he conceived of modernity as modernities. This hesitation was due to his initial aspiration to attest universal humanity and the criticisms of his method. This evidently contained a danger of altering the analytical device to suit a teleological reasoning. Criticisms against his method were mainly on its deterministic connotation which could be applied to any geographical concept. This line of criticism was especially vital in post-war Japan, because of the bitter memory of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere which justified Japan's imperial expansion, provoking the antipathy of neighbouring countries. Above all, even in the West it is only until recently that studies of space have experienced a constructivist turn (Haugaard and Grovade, 2009). While acknowledging such danger, it is this spatial aspect—the territory of knowledge—that the present thesis aims to develop further. This section attests to the need by re-situating *basso ostinato* in recent debates.

Generalisability of Basso Ostinato

At first glance, the system of conversion *basso ostinato* indicates is seemingly cultural-specific. In fact, Maruyama himself mentions that it is applicable only to Japan since it is an exceptionally homogeneous society in the world (Maruyama, 1976b). However, I argue for its generalisability by stressing that *basso ostinato* is rather regional- or temporal-specific, as the defining factor can be more quickly transformed than cultural factors are assumed to be. Particularly when its geographical aspect is emphasised, *basso ostinato* 'may and indeed do endure in many respects, but

that is not the same as saying that there is a fixed, unchangeable essence to them' (Allen, 2012: 192). Because it is composed by mundane elements as if any piece of music is an aggregation of the same twelve notes (Maruyama, 1984), *basso ostinato* is hard to be reified as a textual form. Indeed because of this intrinsic mundaneness, it easily escapes our attention, and is therefore obstinate but simultaneously transformable.

Basso ostinato is evidenced in Morgenthau's case mentioned in the last chapter. What happened was an analogous conversion of the mode of power in the realist theory. According to Behr and Rösch (2015: 47-49; see also Rösch, 2014a), for Morgenthau, who was an immigrant in the US from Europe, power was understood as 'a psychogenic condition' resting on intersubjective relations. By deploying the term 'realism', Morgenthau tried to draw attention to the situation from which people were subliminally eschewing in order to recognise the reality as real, and also to encourage them to overcome the situation by exerting the power with which people could cooperate. Nevertheless, his insistence was instead interpreted as a legitimatisation to use their 'power over' as a means of domination in line with the Hobbesian tradition, diverging from his intention. In the case of Morgenthau, it was despite the alleged cultural affinity between Europe and the United States as 'the West'.

Unstructured Structure in World Politics?

Thus, examining the spatial difference identified by *basso ostinato* enables us to see world politics, particularly in terms of difference, in a fresh way. The possible existence of divergent modes of power suggests that different geographical communities do not share a territory of knowledge. Power becomes power when it is collectively and empirically imagined in a specific mode among the members of a community. The alleged cultural affinity of transatlantic relations in Morgenthau's case suggests that this mode is performative, in which the temporal-spatial context (especially the latter), rather than culture, plays an important role. The recent rise of classical realism and the clash between 'Mars and Venus' (Kegan, 2003) both show that this divergence is transformable despite the deterministic connotation of geography. They also indicate that, in the limited sense of Barnes and his power discussed in the previous chapter, there was no 'international society' even within the transatlantic relations, at least in a few decades after the Second World War. Power was envisaged differently in the two communities, and therefore the interpretations of

analogous knowledge vary in relation to each mode of power, generating unique meanings in each milieu. Hence, the international can be understood as an unstructured sphere, if not anarchical, without a shared mode of power in particular. Knowledge transfers took place despite the unnoticed difference. For sure, the ‘interaction’ itself might contribute to the construction of a new and apparent common mode of power which could change the whole structure of global politics later (Buzan and Lawson, 2005). However, the initial gap would remain as long as the void is left unperceived as evidenced in the recent rise of classical realism.

Agency, Structure, or Performance?

Basso ostinato helps illuminate key differences in world politics in relation to space, and can shed new light on recent debates on international history of political thought. As stated in the last chapter, malleability and rigidity in terms of learning lie at the heart of modern Japan’s paradox in the assimilation of Western knowledge and its entry into international society. Yoshino’s account suggests that the reason for the latter was neither because the Japanese were attracted by the West’s prosperity and became convinced by its universal claim, nor because they were simply forced to do so. Rather, it was an apparently conscious choice of the community that enabled the state’s assertive assimilation of knowledge. Because this choice made by the community is a collective instinctive procedure, as Yoshino has suggested, the mutation of knowledge in an exotic space becomes inevitable but superficially intractable, and tends to be forgotten even inside the community as time passes (Yoshino, 1927). Thus, foreign knowledge is automatically given an initial appraisal in the local power structure, but what enables the appropriation is this subtle change. *Basso ostinato* radically counters Eurocentric accounts of the history of knowledge diffusion. It disputes the centre-periphery accounts of world system as it sees the subjectivity of locals as an equally necessary condition for the appropriation of foreign knowledge.

In the English-speaking world, only a few recent studies have started to question the Eurocentric bias of international intellectual history. Arnulf Lorca (2015) depicts how the use of international law in peripheral societies including Japan, where people see the world differently, has modified the notion itself. However, envisaging the world as a monolithic, centre-periphery, and hierarchical structure, his framework does not fully capture the locals’ creativity involved. By contrast, Shogo Suzuki

(2011) has argued that Japan joined the European international society with a strategic choice that emphasised the socialisation processes. However, this agency-centred view falls short of explaining not only the excitement in popular imagination towards the acceptance of international law, but also the difference between China and Japan as Suzuki sees the structure no less monolithic than Lorca does. In fact, Suzuki argues that newly independent states have no choice but to enter the Eurocentric international society, paradoxically emphasising the monolithic world structure.

Different from Lorca and Suzuki, Erik Ringmar's comparative study employs a theatrical perspective using the metaphor of performance. His research provides a noteworthy explanation to the structural plurality of international society, while simultaneously diminishing the danger of prioritising a specific region. His focus is on '*how meanings mean*' among agents (Ringmar, 2012: 2, emphasis in original). For Ringmar, performance is a dynamic dialogue between the social actors and the audience. It is facilitated by 'pragmatics of discourse', rendering a specific meaning meaningful only among actors who are active in a theatre. To explain how performance works in international politics, Ringmar compares the different spatial organisations between China, Japan, and Europe. He observes that space was relational for the centripetal order of China's Qing Dynasty. In Westphalian Europe, space was territorial. Tokugawa Japan held an eclectic conception of the two. For this reason, Tokugawa Japan came to take part in the dialogue at the 'European theatre' by continuously realigning its framing, whereas China did not become an active audience of this particular theatre (Ringmar, 2012).

Ringmar concentrates on the representations and interactions of official politics caught in the territorial trap, and while this less structural account points to the significant role of regional cognitive difference and proximity (Agnew, 2003, 2015; see chapter 1 of this thesis), it misses the function of the productive misunderstandings in a micro scale that was identified by Japanese scholars (See also Ringmar, 2016). This is because Ringmar analyses the whole procedure by premising on only the absolute and unified space, but neglecting the relational spaces for each actor (Harvey, 2006, 2007). Accordingly, his focus stays on official boundaries. Borrowing from Ringmar, however, we can ask: where did the performance take place? The issue unresolved in his comparative account is an incongruence in which the superficial concord was in fact supported by substantial differences in the micro scale and not simply by the identifiable sameness in the meso-scale.

On the other hand, Chih-yu Shih's (2012) discussion seems to clarify the difference between the two states in a similar manner to Ringmar, but by taking a structural approach. However, he equally sees the segmentalised structure in a unified space. He argues that modern China and Japan have struggled with the problem of 'self-image' and not 'self-identity' (ibid.: 26). In contrast to the Western self-other framing, he suggests a 'centre-periphery frame' where identity is 'about moral responsibility, and not about difference'. The difference between the Chinese idea of 'under-heaven' and Japanese Shinto is, he notes, that Shinto has a 'strategic othering'. Because of Japan's history of continuous importation of foreign knowledge, the other 'have served as associates of the Shinto identity, which is stable, unambiguous, undeniable, absolute, and yet inexpressive and amorphous'. Therefore, Japan's invasion into other Asian countries was 'not an Othering act psychologically, but an act of self-rectification' (ibid.: 29-30: see also Browning, 2010).

Although I have reservations about his 'absolute' claim on Shinto identity,¹⁵ Shih's contention points to a more fundamental epistemic difference than Ringmar's. Nevertheless, Shih's view still does not answer the question of collective thought, as he stresses the strategic aspect and the role of Japanese elites. For sure, the centre-periphery frame is a better explanation for Japan's and China's identity constructions than the self-other frame. However, this individualist-rationalist account also falls short of explaining the smaller details that make a difference in unconscious realm, and this shortcoming occurs because Shih sees the space of analysis as a uniform one, and accordingly stabilises the subjects without considering their subjectivities. Accordingly, despite the fact that he notes the difference between China and Japan, he does not fully elaborate the crucial difference in how each state imagine the self differently.

This difference is clearly seen in the dissimilar notions of territory between the two countries. Yano Jin'ichi argued in 1921 that Chinese people had 'not only no border but also no state' (the 'state' here refers to the Western notion, not the traditional Chinese one). Whereas the state is an outcome of struggles over borders, Yano stated that it was 'theoretically evident' that there had been no borders in China, because China saw itself as the world and as the 'Universal Empire' that could not possibly

¹⁵ For example, Yasumaru (2007[1992]) points out that Japanese religious consciousness in the early modern period was a congruity of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto, and he further asserts that Shinto was a modern ideological construction to unite Japanese society. See also Watsuji (1948).

have border disputes. In this context, the foreign settlements during Qing China not were the results of defeat, but a way to insulate uncivilised Europeans (Yano, 1940: 1-8).¹⁶ Likewise, the cession of Hong Kong to Britain was, for China, never the result of the resignation (Sun, 2007: 14) but a product of their way of ordering space better. Likewise, Sato Shin'ich argues that in the course of modernisation China came to acknowledge that it had to transform to *a* state from *the* Empire (see also Ringmar, 2013).

There then exists an indisputable contrast between China and Japan, in which the latter first tried to drive out Westerners and then later accepted them by a sudden turn. Historically Japan was an island state with a natural border, even though its existence was rarely acknowledged. This spatial order was more a natural endowment than a social construction. When the border was invaded, Japan reacted more aggressively than China, not because Japan had acquired the notion of territory from the West, but because the geography and history endowed Japan with a more concrete notion of border. In addition, Japan at least had a sense that it was *a* state. Despite having imported political thoughts from China, Japan's way of ordering space was nonetheless different from China, partly because of the experiences of the Japanese in their particular environment. Without taking this difference into consideration, Shih's evasive account is Japan's strategic othering, which does not explain the popular fascination of Japan.

By contrast, Sun Ge's analysis of the centre-periphery framing explicates the important chasm between Japan and China, especially in terms of mode of power, resonating with Maruyama's and Yoshino's arguments. She argues that in the Japanese version of *hua yi* order developed during the Edo Period, the relation between the centre (*hua*) and its peripheries (*yi*) were interchangeable, while in the original Chinese version they were basically fixed. In this Japanese tradition, 'a premise foreign to Chinese thinking was instituted, i.e. so-called cultural identification and the provenance of that culture can obtain a relation of relative autonomy from one another' (Sun, 2007: 15). Consequently, Meiji Japan accepted the West as the new centre by stretching the *hua yi* metamorphosis, separating the sign (centre) from its physical

¹⁶ Miwa (1981) claims that this theory of 'China as no-state' is a fallacy. My claim here is to not argue for China as an exception, but that the understanding of the concept of the state can be different in each community.

referent (China) (Sun, 2007; see also Hamashita, 1999; Bonnett, 2010). This twist clearly points to diverged modes of power between Japan and China.¹⁷

Multiple Structures?

With these accounts, however, the question yet unexplored is the enthusiastic acceptance of ‘the international’ (Armitage, 2014) by Japanese people. The epigraph of this chapter, taken from a lecture by George Kennan, discusses the possible source of fascination as ‘the gentle civilizer of national interest in which they find their true value’ (Kennan, 1951: 53-54). In Yoshino’s explication, the sort of power introduced by the Americans with the intention to persuade Japanese people ended up serving for all people paradoxically, Japanese government officials and their people alike, who equally abused the term in their everyday contexts. At the same time, it automatically helped the Japanese *samurai*, most of whom had initially supported *sonnō jōi* (revere the emperor, expel the barbarians), change their mind drastically towards opening the country. For certain, this supported America’s national interest in its demand of opening up Japan superficially, dovetailing with its rhetoric of America’s hegemony. However, for the Japanese at least during the period, the power of international law did not represent solely that of the United States. On the contrary, the power of international law *qua* universal law served for all people, not only the Americans or Christians. Japanese people acknowledged international law as a technology of civilisation, not the possession of the West but of humanity in general, whilst the Americans saw it as their possession invented by Western wisdom (Fukuzawa, 1995[1875]; see also Yamamuro, 2001: 605).

This contradiction of international law as a gentle civiliser on the one hand and as a rigorous power executor on the other brings out the question of agreement between the signifier and the signified among various actors. There are two points of contention here. First, as already discussed, the concept of international law was replaced in practice after its importation. Second, as argued by Sun (2007) above, the centre of authority is transformable for Japanese people, and this idea of interchangeable power centre obviously helped them accept exotic notions. Since the Japanese read the notion in reference to their unique site-specific mode of power, even the apparent obedience

¹⁷ Satō argues that in China, though it was later than in Japan, the centre was replaced from the self not to the West but to the universal standard of civilization (Satō, 1977: 238).

to the law would make sense for them. This indicates firstly that the same idea can be understood differently when modes of power become different, since they also change the perception of the relation among actors even when the contents are apparently identical. Second, and therefore in accordance with the mode of power in Japan, the apparent obedience was not to the Americans but to the law itself, which however was interpreted into an indigenous law. Without acknowledging this ‘self-interest’, as pointed out by Kennan, it would be doubtful whether Japan compromised in the formal international negotiations on the unequal treaties.

Basso ostinato as a manifestation of everyday relations in a geographically defined yet ever-changing community explains this external-internal entanglement, identifying the unsynthesisable cognitive gap that allowed the Japanese in the end to accept the power brought by the United States. While the identical components are supported by various cognitions, the cognitive gap goes unnoticed because the agreement is ‘attained’ in between the analytical spaces. The respective spaces do not dictate that the elites or the powerful are necessarily the actors and the people are the audience; the theatre is much more interactive with stages everywhere, and everyone can be a performer as well as the audience, thereby connecting the spaces in their respective imaginations. Despite their outwardly autopoietic character, the spaces are associated and related to each other through topological proximity (Allen, 2012). Therefore, the reason Japan accepted the Westphalian state system was not just because it was familiar to them as Ringmar (2012) suggests, but also because they (mis)interpreted the exotic power structure in reference to their own power structure.

Throughout the process, formal negotiations and agreements played a secondary role. The Japanese delegates were probably influenced by popular fascination on, and the domestic ‘misuse’ of, the notion, and this might have changed the negotiation and consequent events in the international sphere, which in turn might have affected popular opinion. Needless to say, the government officials were members of the collective. Negotiation and representation in formal politics are thus illuminated by mundane practices in local sites that are ignored from a perspective focusing on formal and dialogical processes in the international sphere. This is not to argue that intercultural dialogue is unimportant, but that the observable determinant essentially requires a hidden premise. In order to understand the dialogue, we first need to acknowledge this hidden spatiality. What accelerates the contingent transmittance of knowledge is primarily the site-specific mode of power and the resulting cognitive gap

between communities. The locals accept exotic ideas thanks to the misunderstandings backed by everyday practices. This hidden spatiality is neither noticed nor corrected through the dialogue despite its importance, as it is engendered in each local space automatically but not in the international sphere.

Nonetheless, exactly due to the negligence, the unsynthesisable gap ensures, rather than impedes, the occurrence and acceptance of ‘the promiscuous entanglements of global and local logics’ that crystallised ‘different conditions of possibility’ in different places (Ong, 2007: 5). The gap is ‘not structural hierarchy but an oblique point of entry into the asymmetrical unfolding of emerging milieus’ (Ong, 2007: 5). It is facilitative precisely because it is *not* negotiated, and it is not negotiated because the void falls behind the spaces. International law certainly functioned as ‘universal’ law. However, the universal in the unified space becomes apparent only when it is embraced by diverged local modes of power in each space. In this way, misunderstanding(s) become productive, paradoxically enabling the local to support the global albeit unwittingly. Because the misunderstanding(s) change not the contents but only the power relations, they tend to be neglected from the outside and forgotten later even by the inside community. The interpretive-explanatory analyses introduced above cannot cogently explicate these different intelligibilities because, seeing the space as unified, they presuppose the identity of the subject as well as the object of knowledge. *Basso ostinato* by contrast allows us to observe the difference itself without presuppositions. It indicates that what makes an analogous concept substantially different in different spaces is the diverged modes of power that define the power relations presented by the concept. The cognitive gap implies that the modes of power are not shared among territories, making the international sphere unstructured. In each milieu, power in one text can be activated only when it makes sense in each imagination. Thus, the local mode of power can mutate the connotation of a concept without changing its appearance.

Knowledge becomes global when each site-specific power happens to project an approximate version based on their different comprehensions, such that it attains an ostensible agreement in this unstructured structure. However, this does not ensure mutual intelligibility among territories. As Foucault points out, knowledge is about a space ‘in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in discourse’ (Foucault, 1982a: 182). Yet the identity of the objects *per se* must also be scrutinised in an inter-regional context. In the case of international law,

the power of knowledge seemingly widened its sphere of influence and helped Japanese people understand the notion in their own making, without a direct conflict with the American understanding of power despite a significant difference between the two. For sure, the popular fascination in Japan fell beyond the jurisdiction of the United States, but it is nonetheless an integral part of the big picture despite the apparent closed nature of each milieu. For the Japanese, international law was meant for empowerment; for the Americans, it was their possession and the vindication of their wisdom, which hindered them from fully understanding the Japanese acceptance of the law. The Japanese's image of the international was different from the Americans' because it was based on their imagination backed by their history and geography. Nonetheless, the US and Japan reached an official agreement as the gap automatically gave them margin to frame the notion in each particular way, paradoxically projecting the seemingly analogous images into an actual global space (Collier and Ong, 2005).

This could make the perception of power in the international sphere more complex than it appears. In the dissemination of international law in Japan, the misunderstanding played a decisive role. It was less a product of interaction but more of unnoticed lack of communication behind the superficial consent. As explicated above, we see only ephemeral assemblages of different imaginations and actions, which may be observed as an act in concert when seen only from a generalised macro perspective. What composes the assemblage is in fact a 'hesitant set of practices' (Thrift, 2000). These practices are 'a series of facts that "may seem insignificant" but that may open up, once put together in a meaningful way, "a complex reality that is not directly experiential" or that may remain opaque without them' (Guillaume, 2013: 110). The formal, official negotiations are the outcome of the assemblages. Without the micro practices, the big picture can never take shape. Without the hidden disagreement, the formal agreement will never be attained. Therefore, the space for analysing cross-regional knowledge dissemination has to be envisaged as relational and plural, that is, as *spaces*. By doing so, the space can be conceived as something that bridges the seemingly incongruent elements.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter examined mainly critical literature written in Japanese on intellectual history, especially those surrounding the questions of how, by whom, and where

traveling knowledge is interpreted. It deepened the inquiry into the issue of context by focusing on the cognitive gaps between analytical spaces in which locals decontextualise and recontextualise foreign knowledge. There are three important findings. First, it is the cognitive void in between the territories that actually facilitates the assimilation of knowledge. Second, exotic knowledge is appropriated only when it makes sense through a comprehension in relation to available knowledge and the local modality of power. In the process, the object of knowledge can even be replaced. Third, it is difficult to presuppose an integrated world structure as a unified space of analysis. Therefore, the space of knowledge dissemination has to be analysed as spaces, in which power is imagined in many different ways. This way, all the relevant elements—space and time, past and present, domestic and international, sameness and difference, local and global, reason and affect, continuity and change, and even theory and practice—can be considered in correlational rather than oppositional terms. *Basso ostinato* indicates that the relation is not just it but there must be an emergent ‘thingness’ (Allen, 2012) that ephemerally stabilises those relations at a specific spatio-temporal frame.

Maruyama’s synthesis presents clearly the challenge of international intellectual history in the case where physical and intellectual distances are present: theory and practice on the one hand, continuity and change on the other. These seemingly paradoxical pairs have to be understood as correlational. When political theory travels cross-regionally, its subject is doomed to be replaced on the locals’ part. Accordingly, the same text is read differently and the object of knowledge is also replaced unnoticeably. The replacements are therefore facilitated by a site-specific mode of power, and in short, theory is interpreted differently by a new subject who holds different practices. It is this rudimentary procedure at the nascent stage of the process of knowing that enables theory to be generalised and abstracted in order to be successfully localised. The next step is interaction and negotiation that ultimately transforms the text in a visible way. Thus, theory is transubstantiated by a local mode of power, its acceptance contingently conditioned by different practices. In this respect, the misunderstanding of theory and knowledge is necessary and productive, because it is in these misunderstandings where local political subjectivities arise. Hence, continuous local practices play a part in social changes induced by the importation of exotic knowledge. Modern Japan experienced radical transformations because of, not despite, the homogeneity. Because of this homogeneity, *basso*

ostinato, as a system of conversion governed by a site-specific mode of power that paradoxically supported new knowledge, is widely shared in the community over a long duration. Through elaborating on *basso ostinato*, Maruyama aspired to pin down the root cause of historically continuous misinterpretations of exogenous knowledge by the Japanese. However, the conclusion he reached suggests that the misunderstanding was in fact a necessary evil for the assimilation of new knowledge, since the cognitive void ultimately generated the subjectivity of the Japanese.

Hence, Japan became a modern state because of, not despite, the misinterpretations. In this respect, it was a thoroughly Japanese state looking like a European modern state. International law was accepted in Japan in precisely this fashion; that is, by being interpreted into a substantially different notion, but simultaneously enabling the Japanese to envisage an idea of the international, and ultimately allowing the Japanese state to become the first member of European international society despite the physical and intellectual distance. To put it in another way, Japan accepted the domination of Western knowledge on the surface, paradoxically because they belonged to a territory of knowledge well distinguished from Europe. This conundrum can be understood only when space and structure are envisaged as multiple and relational.

3 Analytical Framework

Doesn't it turn your stomach to think that America is east and Japan west [of the Pacific]? This doesn't make sense. For me Japan must be regarded as the Land of the Rising Sun and as *Toa* [East Asia]. What an unpleasant thing it is to say that Japan is not *Toa*! Surely there is a way to make sure Japan stays as the east and America as the west!

—Dazai Osamu, '8th December' (1942)

3.1. Introduction

This chapter further investigates the inside of a recipient community, aiming to develop an analytical framework for analysing traveling theory. It proceeds in accordance with the three questions that newly arose hitherto. The first question is: What was the epistemology and power in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century? In the previous chapter, I studied the role of cognitive gap and proposed to envisage analytical space as spaces, arguing that as people in different communities conceive of power relations differently, even the same text can be read in diverged ways. What the chapter did not thoroughly clarify were in what sense this relation in Japan was different from that of the West in the first half of the twentieth century. The second question is how to conceptualise this local community as a territory of knowledge. The final question is how to envisage multiple spaces in which foreign knowledge is interpreted relationally, particularly in the context of existing literature.

These questions will be addressed mainly by relying on the works of Nishida Kitarō, a Japanese philosopher who devoted his life to the inquiry of place (*basho*) and was famous for being the leading scholar of the Kyoto School. His thought is given weight here not only as an empirical evidence that demonstrates Japan's particular epistemology, but also as a theoretical resource. As will be explicated later in the chapter, Nishida's approach contested Kantian philosophy. However, Nishida did not make a complete objection, only an attempt to fill in the gaps he identified in Western philosophy. As he was living in Japan, a distant space from Europe with particular geographical traits, where people imported European knowledge, his

contestations of Kant embodied a specific way of comprehending spatiality in terms of knowledge production. Briefly put, conceiving place, not space, as the substratum and therefore universal instead of subject, in Nishida's epistemology, all are seemingly inverted. My inquiry here is neither to emphasise the uniqueness of Japanese thought nor to attest its validity. Rather, it aims to construe, with an approach from within, a particular (if not unique) way of seeing that was shared in the community called 'Japan' during the period. It is an attempt to draw a part of the world map of knowledge dissemination by providing another standpoint. The question here is *how*, that is, the method of inquiry (and must be understood strictly in this way), not the description of the interpretations *per se*. Therefore, the map of knowledge dissemination looks more topological than topographical, in which relations between the points are maintained but the scales, the distances, and the directions are all subject to change. For this purpose, I attempt to elucidate as carefully as possible the specific epistemic community I have been calling 'Japan' so far. I consider international intellectual history not as a uni-linear process, but rather as a web-like concurrent development without prioritising any region. By focusing on the points on the map, my aspiration is to excavate substantial differences that have been overlooked in conventional comparative approaches, which tend to focus on boundaries and inter-cultural dialogues.

This chapter proceeds in two sections. In the first section, I address the first question by explicating Nishida's theory, particularly his epistemology developed as a rebuttal to Kantian epistemology, and highlighting the typical mode of power behind the theorisation. In doing so, it aims to demonstrate how spatial difference can be fundamental. In the next section, firstly I address the question of multiple space by linking Nishida's thought to current debates on how to analyse space, in an effort to find a common ground of analysis between regions nonetheless. Based on these arguments, next, will re-conceptualise Japan as a territory of knowledge and later a community of experience. Finally, I will establish and explain the analytical framework for this thesis.

3.2. Epistemology and Power in Japan

One of the pitfalls of employing geography in constructing an analytical framework is the risk of falling into determinism by emphasising spatial or cultural differences, by drawing boundaries arbitrarily, or by treating state borders as given. To avoid such

danger, this section considers the question inversely, by carefully examining how space and knowledge were conceived by members of the community of Japan. It demonstrates that this particular community perceived space and boundary differently from European communities. Nishida, frequently referred to as the country's one and only philosopher (Nakamura, 1983; Kosaka, 2002), is perhaps the best person to consult for this geo-historical inquiry into Japan.¹ Contrasting Maruyama who conducted a critical investigation into how foreign knowledge was localised, Nishida's lifelong inquiry was about how knowledge became knowledge in a particular space. Maruyama, who had an aspiration for universal humanism, pursued the question of subjectivity and knowledge; Nishida, on the other hand, was obsessed with the question of space and knowledge. Whereas for Maruyama, spatial difference was something that had to be overcome, it was only the starting point of inquiry for Nishida. Finally, Nishida overall supported the Greater East Asia War (the Pacific War) as a war of justice, while Maruyama did not.

However, I disagree with the simplistic opinion that Nishida was a Zen thinker who relied on Eastern philosophy to challenge Western philosophy (cf. Abe, 1990; Nakano, 2011). On the contrary, as John Krummel (2012: 50) argues, Nishida's philosophy is 'well grounded in both Western philosophy and the Eastern traditions'. As Nishida himself stated, what he wanted to do 'is neither to deny Eastern culture with Western culture, nor the other way round. Nor is it to contain one within the other. Rather, it is to find a deeper and larger common ground of the two, considering both of them in a new light' (Nishida, 1982[1940]: 146-147). For him, a creative particularity has to contain a universality in itself, not *vice versa*. A particularity that only asserts its particularity by relying on others is a mere 'other particularity' (Nishida, 1982[1940]: 145). Thus, Nishida and Maruyama, even though they took almost opposite approaches, shared an aspiration for finding 'true' universality with Japan's experience beyond the superficial universality.

My interest in Nishida's thought lies in the concept of space in his theory of place (*basho no ronri*). I believe that the theory can fill a gap Maruyama left untouched due to his reservation about considering spatiality in his analysis. The gap is filled by

¹ In IR literature, Inoguchi (2007: 379-382) refers to Nishida as an 'innate constructivist' who 'developed quite robust theoretical arguments'. Inoguchi, following Ong (2004), identifies Nishida's life-long question, i.e. that of restoring Japanese historical consciousness in relation to the inferiority it felt throughout its encounter with the West.

Nishida in two ways, namely by answering how geography can affect people's way of thinking, and how the space of traveling theory can be conceived as spaces. On the other hand, while Nishida's theory unearthed the ways in which spatiality haunts us however ephemerally, Maruyama's critical approach complements the danger of determinism in Nishida's research. By combining the two seemingly opposing thoughts, therefore, Japan as a territory of knowledge can be elucidated more comprehensively.

A Theory of Place (Basho)

As Nakamura Yūjirō states, Nishida's inquiry stemmed from an acute recurrent question that is even relevant today in modern Japan's intellectual community: whether there exists a so-called Eastern philosophy. The philosopher Miyake Sesturei (1860-1945) lamented that Eastern philosophy, understood largely in the Confucian tradition and remaining at the level of annotating the verbatim arguments and discussions of Confucius, 'existed for nothing', whereas Western philosophy had the capability to explain any complex debate. In order to be called 'philosophy', Miyake asserted, Eastern philosophy had to 'be objectified' (Nakamura, 1983: 8-14). Nakamura construes this Japanese self-criticism by introducing two general aspects of philosophy: knowledge and worldview. While Western philosophy has its strength in the first aspect, which has allowed it to search for truth and accordingly universal claims, the Confucian tradition has a stronger commitment to the second, making its existence context-dependent. In an effort to address the question of Eastern philosophy, Nakamura points out, Japanese intellectuals trained in the Confucian tradition had already started to doubt the logocentrism of Western philosophy during the Meiji Period (1868-1912) when Japan vigorously imported Western thought. However, the context-dependency of 'Eastern thought' made it difficult to provide an alternative. The sense of imperfection among the Japanese intellectuals pushed some of them to philosophically investigate human capability and self-consciousness from a materialist perspective, which considers the living body as the only reality (Nakamura, 1983: 8-20; see Tosaka, 1977[1935] for another example).

Nishida's philosophy was a culmination of this tradition, which might be called Japanese voluntarism (Nakamura, 1983). Nishida, in his foreword to the new edition of his seminal *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911, 1990: xxxiii), wrote: 'I do not know what influenced me, but since long ago I have had an idea that true reality must be

actuality just as it is and the so-called material world is something conceptualised and abstracted out of it'.² Starting from this fundamental inquiry, Nishida questioned the objectivity of knowledge in relation to space. In his essay 'The Unresolved Issue of Consciousness' (Nishida, 1927: 53),³ he argued, '[b]ecause Kantian philosophy begins with the premise that there is knowledge and takes as its issue the problem of how its objectivity is possible, it automatically does not take consciousness qua knowledge to be the issue'. Nishida's philosophy is best known for two concepts: pure experience, and place (*basho*). What drove him to develop these concepts were his obsession with reality and 'the issue of knowing qua consciousness' (Nishida, 1927: 52).

In order to thoroughly understand the process of cognition, he first developed the concept of pure experience, which became the basis of his philosophy. He borrowed the term 'pure' from William James' radical empiricism, and tried to capture with this term the very inception of the cognitive process. He claimed: '[t]o experience means to know facts just as they are, to know in accordance with facts by completely relinquishing one's own fabrications' (Nishida, 1990: 3). It contains no knowledge, no thought, no judgment, only the physicality of body. At the moment of pure, or direct, experience, '[t]here is not yet a subject or an object, and knowing and its object are completely unified'. This union is, as Nishida stated, like the consciousness of a new-born baby. Another example he provided was a proficient artist practicing her skills intuitively and reflexively. The pure experience is the beginning of all of consciousness, the fact 'just as they are' (Nishida, 1990: 3-4). This subject-object union in the pure experience is disrupted when past consciousness enters to gain conscious of the present experience to generate judgments and meanings. This process is essentially immanent as it is caused by its own past consciousness. For Nishida, consciousness is based on the relational comprehension of past and present by the self. At this moment, objectification takes place, in which the distinction between subject and object is engendered. When any past consciousness is invoked at the present moment in this way, it generates meanings and judgements, which is a moment of disunity, in contrast to the unity of pure experience (Nishida, 1990).

² Quoted from M. Abe and C. Ives' English translation (1990).

³ John Krummel translated this essay into English in 2012. The ensuing quote is from Krummel's translation.

As evidenced in Krummel and the quote mentioned earlier, Nishida's pure experience stemmed from his discomfort with the dualism in Kantian philosophy. Nishida argued, by presupposing the objectivity of knowledge, that Kantian philosophy 'comes to relate to consciousness for its reconstitution as an object of knowledge', transcending consciousness. However, bracketing a determining process, it comes to be a mere 'dichotomization of reality into the realm of *a priori* conditions serving as forms of determination on the one hand, the realm of the matter of determination, in itself unformed, objectively undetermined' (Krummel, 2012: 45). 'Epistemology is a discourse on the constitution of the cognitive object and a clarification of the objectivity of knowledge' (Nishida, 1927: 52). By contrast, for Nishida, an 'act is not immediately consciousness' (ibid.: 52). 'It is not that the fact that we are living is known to us through thinking. It is that because we live, we think' (Nishida, 1936, in Nakamura, 1983: 45). His philosophy was to line up all 'things' (*mono*),⁴ the subject and the object, the knower and the being known, literally in the same field without prioritising one over the other, in an effort to consider how perception begins (Nishida, 1926, 1927). In so doing, he tried to 'shed light upon the very consciousness that escapes objectification' (Krummel, 2012: 48).

Nishida believed that the process of knowing, which belongs to the 'space of consciousness', has to be thoroughly reconsidered in order not to presuppose any objectivity (Nishida, 1926: 74). At the same time, how these 'things' are mutually related to compose the whole system of consciousness has to be carefully conceptualised. This must be done without assuming the transcendental entry of the object into consciousness, or privileging the subject. In order to avoid the 'hidden premise behind modern epistemology', that is, the 'conception of cognition as a relationship between objectified beings' (Krummel, 2012: 46), Nishida had to scrutinise the issue of 'consciousness that is conscious' seriously, which even Husserl's phenomenology had failed to take up as an issue (Nishida, 1926: 127, 1927). To this end, Nishida developed the concept of pure experience, the moment when the object and the subject simultaneously emerge, without prioritising either of them. However, this inevitably deprived him of a logical foundation where the consciousness emerges in relation to the object. For him, the logical foundation was

⁴ Here Nishida uses the Chinese character '者', which in itself means 'person'. However, the sound *mono* in Japanese also means 'thing'. This is why *mono* should be better understood as things in general, not just humans.

‘mere logos’ (Nishida, 1927: 53) in modern epistemology. Instead, he needed a link to connect between things, and eventually employed the idea of ‘place that is itself transcendent’ and used it to envelope all of the subjects and objects (Nishida, 1926: 69). This was how he came to conceive *basho* as the substratum, which is ‘behind every objectifying act’ (Krummel, 2012).

Copernican Revolution?

Nakamura (1983: 92) claims that this move of Nishida’s is an epistemological ‘Copernican revolution’. By turning his attention to place, which is a contrastive position concealing both the subject and the object, Nishida abandoned the grammatical subject altogether, which is a common premise in Western philosophy. Instead, he picked the predicate (*jutsugo*) as the basis of judgment. Krummel (2012: 46) likewise points out that in doing so Nishida departed from ‘Aristotelian substantialism, which views reality reductively under the lens of Indo-European grammar in terms of the grammatical subject’. In the essay ‘Place’, Nishida (1926: 74) says, ‘I would like to think of knowing as an act that belongs to conscious space’. To this end, his exploration began from a ‘consciousness of self reflection within the self’, then further making a distinction between a ‘consciousness that one is conscious of’ and a ‘consciousness that is conscious’ (Nishida, 1927: 54). For him, the ‘fundamental meaning of knowing’ is about ‘knowing the self [and] knowing others’, not simply knowing others with the self. Such a process begins as a pure experience. Because *basho* envelopes the entire system (see below), Nishida asserted, it has to be transcendent, objective, and therefore ‘absolute nothingness’ so that it defines every existence. Space is not in contrast to being, but rather the whole background of being (Nishida, 1926: 70-77). Therefore, this nothingness must contain the entire system of possibility. *Basho* has to be established in such a way that it is transcendent and never objectified. The field in which we project what we think, which Nishida called the ‘field of consciousness’, relying on Husserl’s terminology, is also contained in this *basho* (Nishida, 1926: 69-70).

However, in the purview of this thesis, i.e. how spatial difference can be manifest in global knowledge dissemination, the important question is in what sense Nishida’s view was revolutionary. Did he, for example, really depart from Aristotelian subjectivism, as Nakamura (1983) has argued? Besides the plain facts that Nishida’s study relied on his profound knowledge in both Western and Eastern philosophies,

and that his aspiration was not to prioritise either of them, I will seek to point out a similarity, rather than a contrast, between Nishida and the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure.

Working with the question, ‘at what’⁵ does a “thing” exist? (Nishida, 1926: 84), Nishida observed that ‘the epistemologists today distinguish between consciousness and object, and think that the consciousness is immanent while the object is transcendent’ (ibid.: 70). Thus, ‘we are forced out of the field of consciousness’ (ibid.: 70) in order to assume the existence of the object. By contrast, for Nishida, being conscious means to reflect the self into the field of consciousness. Therefore, the self cannot leave the field to acquire consciousness. Action is understood as a relation that appears between the reflected object and place. The object and the subject are inconceivable without being situated in the same field. As such, *basho* is what wraps up the whole system of consciousness, where everything—both subject and object alike—comes into being. It is a mirror-like place on which everything reflects itself (ibid.).

Nishida (ibid.: 77-78) illustrated all these with the example of the colour red. He argued that while ‘red’ is considered red within the general concept of colour, the general concept of colour itself is also an object and hence cannot be the base. He believed that everything needs an ultimate background in order to become itself. In other words, ‘red’ requires its place to become red. This field that defines ‘red’ must be something universal in which place also inheres. In other words, ‘red’ does not become red through being distinguished from other colours, but it does so when it reflects itself in the field of consciousness and is considered in relation to past experiences. That is, ‘I’ can be ‘I’, and ‘you’ can be ‘you’, only when this ‘I’ is embedded in the field of consciousness. These subjects cannot stand alone without space. Furthermore, since space in turn exists in relation to these subjects, ultimately it is a place, rather than a space.

In modern epistemology, which presumes the opposition between the knower and the known, it is the knower that is transcendent and imposes categories ‘upon the sense data received from the external world’ (Krummel, 2012: 45). By contrast, in Nishida’s world, because all things are equally located in a place, this opposition does not exist.

⁵ In Nishida’s original, it is expressed as ‘*nani ni oite*’. The literal translation is ‘at what’, in which the emphasis is on ‘at’. Here, though *oite* usually express place or time, he probably used ‘what’ instead of ‘where’ in order not to give *basho* any particular meaning, including spatiality.

Instead, there are only selves, and meaning is essentially autopoietically generated in their seemingly isolated relation but to place. Here, the relation with others, which is the main scope in Saussure's theory, is only the next step. Approaching from this judgment, Nishida concluded that the category of consciousness exists in the predicate rather than in the subject. In other words, it is rather 'the environmental situation', i.e. place, that facilitates objectification (ibid.: 47). As such, Nishida called *basho* the 'transcendent predicate', which never becomes the subject but always envelopes all things. At the same time, it is this predicate that encompasses them.

Nishida's thought seemingly goes beyond Saussure's relational and differential conception of language. However, it is likely that they were in fact caught up in the same question. In a scribble written by Saussure around 1907, he presented a very similar inquiry to Nishida's. Saussure asked: How do concepts, like beef, sky, and red become discourse—at which moment, under what condition, and by what action?⁶ Suenaga Akatane (1999) presumes that with this riddle-like note what Saussure tried to untangle was the possible indeterminacy of language as a social system which paradoxically supports its reproduction. It has been argued that structuralism, which originated from Saussure, insists that the identities of language is determined not 'by reference to objects in the world, but by their internal differences' (Howarth, 2000: 20). However, the paradox of this conception is that 'words stand for an idea, but also have to be related to other words in order to acquire their identity and meaning' (ibid.: 20). According to Howarth, in order to explain this inconsistency, Saussure employed the concept of 'linguistic value', with which he indicated the existence of a shared system of signs (ibid.: 18).

However, Suenaga, arguing that language as a system of difference possibly contradicts that as a symbolic system, both of which were Saussure's main contributions to modern social science, points out that Saussure might actually have doubted the identity of language even among members of a community, analysing the scribble in detail. Even given the possible incommensurability, or despite it, Saussure might have believed that dialogue could be continued. The gap, existing outside discourse and therefore never ensured, automatically facilitates the dialogue (Suenaga, 1999). Whether 'red' points to exactly the same colour for all of us is rarely confirmed

⁶ The scribble continues as follows. However rich the images these concepts evoke, they might not bespeak someone the following: the other wants to convey something to him by uttering these concepts (Suenaga, 1999). It is re-translation from the Japanese by the author.

since it is posited as common sense. However, as Nishida states, each judgment of the object is in practice underpinned by individual experiences (see also Skinner, 1969: 6). If this is true, then the further the distance—whether it is physical or mental—is between people, the more difficult it is to ensure any common ground. Yet this distance does not necessarily lead to an obstacle of dialogue. As seen in the discussion in the previous chapter on the notion of international law, this unacknowledged difference may on the contrary be what clandestinely helped people maintain interaction perpetually and tirelessly, ultimately facilitating knowledge dissemination. Difference, as much as shared values, can accelerate mutual understanding, even though this may be mere chance and rather superficial.

Thus, despite the similarity of their questions, the ways Nishida and Saussure addressed them were distinctively different. While Saussure tried to look for an answer in the uncertainty of the other's mind, Nishida, recognising the uncertainty even in the self, dug deeper into the issue of space and knowledge, which can be paraphrased as the issue of context. Whereas for the former relations exist between signs, for the latter, relations between signs and place precede the relations between signs. Nishida's complex conception here can be explained in two ways, one geo-historical and the other epistemic. First, modern Europe in which Saussure was living in produced knowledge largely within the region, but for Japan where Nishida lived, modern knowledge was imported from somewhere else.

Second, as Nakamura (1983) has claimed, the 'freshness' of Nishida's ideas to the West in fact depended on several characteristics of the Japanese language system. First, in contrast to the European languages which tend to objectify a text, the Japanese language is more inclined towards recognising the hidden meaning in the text itself. This point brings us back Japanese textualism developed through the importation of Confucianism, mentioned in the last chapter. Second, the Japanese language is situational in nature, as discussed above. Finally, Japanese has a particular structure, in which the verb comes at the very end of a sentence. This fundamental structure makes the Japanese language more emotional and experiential, essentially blurring the subject-object relations (Nakamura, 1983: 93-102; see also Kato, 2007). In addition, in Japanese, subject ellipsis is used so often even in formal writing, and makes the language even more situational. Furthermore, the tense frequently wanders between the past and the present in one Japanese sentence (Kato, 2007: 48-53). Therefore, it is

a natural corollary for Japanese speakers to frequently depreciate the subject given its lucidity, and to consider the context more seriously than European speakers do.

All the Japanese thinkers discussed so far—Nishida, Maruyama, Yoshino, and Tsuda— point to the same issue that has to do with knowing. Living in slightly different time periods, they tried to untangle the same question of space, knowledge, and the self from different approaches, given that they were members of the same community that had been a recipient of foreign knowledge for hundreds of years. All of them have noticed that in the course of globalisation, there was a certain cognitive gap between the self and the other, the receiver and the sender of the knowledge, which seemed difficult to be filled. As a receiver, they felt that the uncertainty was rather on their side. Accordingly, they all took the issue of context seriously, to the extent of even doubting the identity of the object between the self and the other. For some, like Nishida, who tried to find universality in particularity itself, the gap was something positive and creative, while for others like Maruyama, who wanted to believe in the universality of knowledge, it was an obstacle.

The difference between Japanese scholars and the Swiss linguist is thus evident. Whilst Nishida started his inquiry from place, the Swiss did so from the subject. While the former thought that ‘red’ as a sign could be differently perceived in a different (distanced) space, the latter doubted whether ‘red’ is perceived in an identical way by others. Whilst for the Japanese the other is someone living outside of their community, for the Swiss it is simply someone who is not the self. Consequently, whilst the former considered the environmental condition of the self prior to the interaction with the other, the latter focused on the interaction. Although both doubted the existence of common knowledge, the conclusions reached through their respective ways of thinking were certainly different due to the essential differences of their analytical spaces.

Japan’s long history of assimilating foreign knowledge on the one hand, and its isolated geography on the other, have strengthened a particular way of thinking that is fundamentally subjective and self-reflexive. For Japanese people, the owner of knowledge is imagined to exist largely outside of their community. However, in the first half of the last century, the increasing cross-cultural interactions in Japan made them realise the existence of a long unnoticed gap between the inside and the outside of the territory of knowledge. This vague but profound awareness provoked a question on their subjectivity in terms of the imported knowledge, bearing an impact so

significant that it caused a series of intensive debates labelled as ‘overcoming modernity’, with modernity being equated to the West. This encouraged Japanese scholars to examine the link between power, subjectivity, and knowledge. It was a question of where the Japanese stand in world history. In this intellectual atmosphere, which had already started to take on a revisionistic and even chauvinistic character by then, Nishida’s theory was welcomed by people’s popular imagination despite the abstrusity of his text, as people perhaps felt that it voiced their feeling by unearthing the role of place in their epistemology. Put differently, the particular way of thinking in Japan came to the surface as its risks were exposed by a different way of (Western) thinking.

Mannheim (1985: 45) states that the ‘principal propositions of the social sciences are neither mechanistically external nor formal, nor do they represent purely quantitative correlations but rather situational diagnoses in which we use, by and large, the same concrete concepts and thought-models which were created for activistic purposes in real life’. For Mannheim, the issue was more the ‘unconscious collective motivation’ than the political motive. Nishida’s theory was certainly a ‘situational diagnosis’ underlain by the embedded logic of a native language, from which none of us can completely escape. What is more, Nishida attempted to unearth this logic in order to *justify* it. But precisely for this reason, his theory spoke too well to people’s feeling, was doomed to be abused by political motives (cf. Kosaka, 2002). As the similarity to Saussure’s riddle suggests, however, Nishida’s question itself was nothing specifically Japanese. What is truly remarkable is that the different epistemic traditions nurtured in different historical and geographical conditions provided different starting points and therefore different conclusions. Thus, Nishida’s theory, like Saussure’s, evidently embodied the epistemology of the community to which each of them belonged respectively. What made Nishida’s theory distinctive is the more spatially defined elements, or the ‘how’, in addition to the historical factors which explain the ‘why’.

Nishida as Another Assemblage Thinker?

I have argued that Nishida’s ostensible epistemic shift was really not a ‘shift’ but a product of a particular epistemic tradition. In other words, he uncovered the hidden premise of Western philosophy by relying on his own hidden premise. The revolution is said to be revolutionary only because it is decontextualised from the Japanese

tradition and recontextualised into the ‘Western’ tradition. However, or rather for this reason, Nishida’s thought still contains a few important implications for contemporary scholarship, which still remains predominantly Western. Besides the fact that it represents the epistemology of the society I am examining (i.e. Japan), I want to argue that we can see the diverged views as complementary to each other, as Nishida has suggested indeed, in order to unearth the whole picture of global knowledge production.

The particular usefulness of Nishida’s theory in a Western context is that he freed the subject from the role of the sole judge, since he looked for answers to the question of judgement in the uncertainty of consciousness. There are two important corollaries here. First, it gives us a clue to understand what Allen (2012) calls ‘the emergent “thingness”’ that stabilises relations in an assemblage. It has been argued that in Nishida’s thought, any societal category is conceived as a dynamic construction (Jones, 2002: 234; see also Ong, 2004: 52), whilst Nishida emphasises particularity. This is because, by introducing place as a substratum, Nishida distinguished the ‘consciousness *that is* conscious’ from the ‘consciousness that one is conscious *of*’ (Nishida, 1927: 54, emphasis in original). In this two-step understanding of consciousness, the first step is *de facto* uncontrollable, or deterministic, for the conscious is yet to be conscious of being determined. The result is that a causality will emerge processually, rather than *a priori*, through the historical actions of multiple actors alongside the will of the subject, and this causality plays a key part in social construction. In addition, the second step is still superficially deterministic, for it is a conscious co-construction between multiple actors, where pure contingency is highlighted concerning how and to whom the meaning performs.

Nishida does not assign any characteristic to *basho* given that he defines it as the background of everything, limitless and seemingly unique like the universe. This gives the impression of a monotonous conception by which the plurality cannot be ensured at first glance. However, for Nishida, place is nothingness because it contains everything, which means there is no oppositional concept. When the place is limited, by contrast, knowledge comes into existence (Nishida, 1926: 105). The consciousness in phenomenology is also within the range of this limited space of existence (Nishida, 1926: 127). *Basho* is the ‘transcendent predicate’ that can never be a subject but envelopes everything. Place as substratum in itself thus has no character but only the absolute capacity yet to be materialised. A specific knowledge arises when we, based

on our past and present experiences, project our specific thought to a limited space. Only then does a subject arise accordingly. The production of knowledge in Nishida's scheme of thought depends on how past experiences cut out a particular space from *basho*. *Basho* wraps up all those spaces. Any of our experiences are primarily perceived at a certain space, as we always live in a specific space. Judgements are made in relation to past experiences that might have happened in another space by automatically cutting out a certain space. The 'consciousness that is conscious' contains the past in itself, whilst the 'consciousness that one is conscious of' indicates the present, suggesting therefore that the past is embodied in the present through consciousness. It is the former (i.e. 'consciousness that is conscious') that brings about latter ('consciousness that one is conscious of'), and Nishida calls the former 'will' (Nishida, 1926: 109-114), because it is this 'consciousness that is conscious' that defines the range of knowledge. Then it is this 'will' that gives a hint of what the 'thingness' can be.

Then the second corollary is that, since all oppositions—say, between subject and object, same and different, self and other—are dissolved, Nishida's thought allows us to understand difference not as binary but as multiple. Therefore, the question is not whether 'what I am seeing is true', but becomes 'in what situation and for whom it can be true'.

In Saussure's conception, because it is the internal difference that identifies things, making the subject-object relation essentially fixed. In Nishida's thought, by contrast, this differentiation is only the second step. The site of determination is therefore multiple, also ensuring multiplicity of knowledge both in terms of the subject and the object. As such, in Nishida's theory of place, the subject and the object can be connected in unanticipated ways depending on different contexts because of this comprehensiveness of place. Nishida states that '[n]ormally, the so-called self is considered unified as a subject with plural characteristics, but in fact it is unified as a predicate and not as a subject, not as a centre but as a circle, not as a thing but as a place. The self cannot know itself because the predicate cannot be the subject' (Nishida, 1926, in Nakamura 1983: 90). Here, the question can be expressed in the form of 'who I am at this particular place and moment', since self-identification stands not only on 'consciousness that one is conscious of', but also on 'consciousness that is conscious' which is determined by place. Meanwhile, and also more importantly, this conception, which seems to be communal at first glance give that the subject is

embedded in space, is simultaneously individualistic, because judgement is a matter of each consciousness. The tandem approach enabled her to embed herself in a community without erasing individuality (cf. Maraldo, 2002). The individual self still holds autonomy but is simultaneously embedded in the structure. Accordingly, it is no longer viable to consider the self and the other, and also the self as an agent and the community as a structure, oppositional. Rather, structure is dissolved into the relationality. Hence, it is relation itself that holds agency (Nishida, 1928a: 73).

As I will show in later chapters, the ‘innate constructivist’ tendency in Japan (Inoguchi, 2007: 379) was not only applicable to Nishida, but also widely to Japanese academia including geopoliticians during the period. Needless to say, this goes against our prevailing understanding of the Japanese’s strong belief of their pure nationhood that is said to have existed and continued since the establishment of the state. The fact is that it was this ‘liberal’ and even seemingly ‘progressive’ idea that became one of the engines behind the state’s imperial expansion and therefore behind the employment of classical geopolitics. The paradox lies in the fact that this seemingly liberal idea was a product of the context-dependent tradition developed in Japan, which however had been affected by imported ideas: Liberalism in a Western context became its diametrically opposite—a ‘conservative’ and revisionist view—in the context of Japan in the first half of the last century, which went on to attract popular support in the era of uncertainty. Note that I am not simply arguing that Japan’s intellectual history was different from the West. Rather, this is to point out that an intellectual tradition can have entirely opposite connotations in different tempo-spatial contexts simply because we all have different experiences as we live in different spaces even if we are contemporaries. Moreover, the developments are still the products of the interactions between different geographical traditions. In this context, Nishida’s constructivism is neither ‘revolutionary’ nor ‘innate’ nor ‘mythic’, but merely a (still) rare product of ordinary intellectual life (Said, 1982: 195) in Japan. Such a view questions what can become ‘standard’ in global intellectual history. Following Edward Soja (1999), spatial difference deserves more attention than its currently marginalised status in critical social theory in general and in international politics studies in particular, since it is possibly even more fundamental than temporal differences. Yet, this is not to say historicity is unimportant; for as I have demonstrated in chapter 1, both aspects are complementary with, not oppositional to, each other, and this complexity can only be excavated by accounting for both aspects together.

Power in Japan

I have so far explicated Nishida's epistemology and explained how it differs from Kantian epistemology, with a view to understand how different an analytical space can be. As discussed in the previous chapter, this difference is crucial for considering the dissemination of knowledge, as it can yield diverse ways of reading power relations in a text. A particular mode of power shared in a community can change the substantial mechanics of an imported political system, even if the components of the system remain unchanged in the process. (Such power relation in the case of Japan was alluded to in the last chapter in the example of the term *kokutai* and the Emperor.) In this particular epistemic community, power is imagined as something that serves for everyone, rather than as someone's possession. The epistemology elaborated by Nishida confirms the presence of this power structure in the first half of the twentieth century.

Here I wish to further clarify this point by using Maruyama's works. In his earlier work on Edo Confucianism written during the Second World War, he compared Japan's modes of power with those of China's and Europe's. He argued that the Chinese notion of heaven, in which the socio-political order was entrusted to Nature, was transformed in Tokugawa Japan to one that became an autonomous invention by humans; this transformation was compared to Europe's transition from an organismic view of society to a functional view during the Medieval Ages. The Chinese organismic view was distinctive from the European one, since the former completely excluded any humanised divinities, seeing Nature itself as the order. On the other hand, in Medieval Europe, divinity ultimately became an 'actuality who does not contain within himself any potentialities' (Maruyama, 1974: 235) but invented the order and endorsed rulers. Meanwhile in Japan, the Chinese immanent natural order was modified into an autonomously invented order that had political rulers as the sage. In other words, the order was decided in Japan by the sage *who was endorsed by nature*. or better interpreted as environment, since it was assumed to change continuously. The political ruler had little value herself. Despite having a similar development to Europe, in Japan, where the concept of transcendental being did not exist and where there was no dominant monotheistic religion in its history, feudal power was entrusted to a particular personality only by chance, and not by the value held by the sage himself. It follows that once a new era came, another sage would take

charge and change the world order. Paradoxically, then, human invention was governed by environment. This unique political structure had continued to Maruyama's time (Maruyama, 1952: 241-275), and to some extent even till today. The affinity of this power structure with Nishida's thought, in which place *is* the environment and has discretion, is evident. As I will elaborate in later chapters, this power of nature *qua* a 'personified' environment was represented during the Pacific War in the term *honzen no sei*, an idea from Confucianism meaning the 'pure and best nature inherent in any human as it is given as the universal intelligence' (Kojien, 1998). This good nature is however normally considered to be tarnished by a material life.

In this Japanese power structure, power generates as the Japanese imagine a design of the surrounding environment in relation to their situation. The authority decides the order with the power endowed only by chance and not by the materiality the power holds. In this understanding of power, any social institution is a construct, but it is powerful precisely because it is understood as a construct and acknowledged as an imagination by the members of the society. Crucially, the social institution has no clear boundaries, as it prioritises place over space. With no solid categorisation, the order is ostensibly egalitarian, although it contained a profound issue in terms of human equality, which I will discuss in detail in the next two chapters.

In the example of the appropriation of international law, Japanese people easily 'misunderstood' the 'novel' concept of international law, in a way that was based on the notion of equality between states stemming from the supposedly egalitarian tradition of Japanese society. The Japanese recognised the falsity of the notion as a Western discursive construction (Suzuki, 2011), but this did not hamper their appreciation of the concept, because they understood that power was endowed to the West by chance. Thus, Westphalian sovereign equality was comprehended differently by the Japanese egalitarian tradition in which order was understood as an endowment by changing environment. This example shows how the commonsensical understanding of world politics can be supported by diverse *topica*, turning the composition of 'common sense about world politics' (Agnew, 2003: 9) into something profoundly complex and even contradictory, thereby potentially enabling the mode of power in world politics to be transformable.

As John Dower (2011: xx-xxi) proposes, what we are facing here is a challenge to understand 'many cultures of modernity itself'. It is about understanding the actual

ubiquity of cultural characteristics that seems peculiar to a specific group but in fact transcends the borders of conventional categories of cultures. They happen temporally almost in conjunction but spatially in disparate ways. The composition of a seemingly unique cultural trait is in fact an aggregate of quotidian elements, as Maruyama's musicological metaphor of *basso ostinato* implies (Maruyama, 1976a). However, these differences need to be unearthed because despite the ubiquity, or rather because of it, the differences are crucial. In this respect, any method of thinking is not a product of a particular culture *per se*, but a contingent product of space and time always doomed to change.

3.3. An Analytical Framework

This section develops an analytical framework for the rest of the thesis. The two previous chapters have attested that a proper account for the analysis of traveling theory has to be comprehensive, in which seemingly oppositional elements—such as continuity and change, time and space, local and global—can be considered in relational terms. The successful voyage of theory is a product of heterogeneous elements associated together through the assertive act of knowing by the locals in a particular historical and geographical context. An unknown idea is accepted only when they make sense in reference to the known, being interpreted by the local mode of power. Initiated almost unconsciously, the process generates a cognitive void between the spaces. It is this void that essentially facilitates local readings. Therefore, the localisation of theory is a contingent process that contains a form of causality. In the previous section, I explicated Nishida's theory of *basho*, discussing how people in Japan envisaged space differently from people in the West. Because Nishida wanted to affirm the *topica* that he believed had to be shared in his community, his theory identified what was the apparent causality in performativity. This complex process in an inter-regional context can be analysed by positing the space of analysis as spaces that hold different structures but that are still in relation to each other. In addition, to avoid the pitfall of geographical and historical determinism, the spaces must be conceptualised not as readily confined spaces but as fundamentally fluid ones. In what follows, I will first reconsider Nishida's *basho* in relation to Western literature, with a view to discover a common ground for both Japanese and Western epistemologies in developing a framework. Second, I will reconceptualise the territory of knowledge as a community of experience. Finally, I will explain the framework itself.

Multiplicity of Space

Nakamura (1983: 78-85) states that Nishida's theory of place is significant because it rediscovers the issue of place in a comprehensive way. Based on Nishida's *basho*, Nakamura envisages place in four ways: place as a substratum, physical place, place as a symbolic space, and place as a hidden intellectual standpoint. The first place is where our self-consciousness is based upon, the place for 'consciousness that is conscious' (Nishida, 1927: 54). The second is where our body is located, where one is conscious of consciousness. The third space is a symbolic space represented as territory. The last space is an expansive re-conceptualisation of the Aristotelian *topica*. Nishida's *basho* covers all of these four places, connecting spaces and places together.

The focus on hidden space is neither uniquely Nishida nor Japanese. Maruyama's *basso ostinato* points to the same function, as does Mannheim's 'unconscious collective motivation'. Likewise, Gianbattista Vico (1990[1965]: 13, 1987: 26) writes, '[i]t is a positive fact that, just as knowledge originates in truth and error in falsity, so common sense arises from perceptions based on verisimilitude. Probabilities stand, so to speak, midway between truth and falsity, since things which most of time are true, are only very seldom false.' For Vico, while judgment is disciplined by *critica*, it is *topica* that leads our perception. Therefore, *topica* precedes *critica*. *Topica* helps us find *topos*, the hidden place of a debate. What composes the verisimilitude (which defines common sense) is our past experiences as already-known knowledge fundamentally nurtured in a particular space. This might be better represented as *sensus communis* in Aristotelian terminology (Nishida, 1926: 118; Vico, 1990[1965]: 13; Nakamura, 1979). This verisimilitude, despite its profundity, affects our thoughts mostly unnoticeably. It is powerful because it has yet to reach the consciousness which one is conscious of, and this is where we can identify a commonality between Vico's *topica* and Nishida's 'consciousness that is conscious'.

Any geographical community has its own first space. In Japan, for instance, the 'consciousness that is conscious' tends to be governed by a context-dependent way of thinking, whilst in the West, it is governed by a logocentric tendency. Nishida here unearthed the Western *topos* relying on Eastern *topos*, and what is important now for analysing traveling theory is not to accuse the existence of a particular *topos* (as critical scholarship tends to do), but to acknowledge the differences between *topoi*.

The idea of relationality and multiplicity of space is becoming a common important concern in recent debates in Western academia. Inspired by Henri Lefebvre, Soja (1999) suggests the term 'Thirdspace' as a lived space. David Harvey (2006, 2007, 2009) proposes a tripartite taxonomy of absolute, relative, and relational spaces. Absolute space is the fixed space of Newton, Descartes, and Euclid. Relative space is the space of Einstein, and relativity is 'in the double sense: that there are multiple geometries from which to choose and that the spatial frame depends crucially upon what it is that is being relativized and by whom' (Harvey, 2006: 272). In this relative space, however, time is still fixed. Finally, relational space is associated with Leibniz, who 'holds there is no such thing as space or time outside of the processes that define them.... Processes do not occur in space but define their own spatial frame. The concept of space is embedded in or internal to process' (ibid.: 273), making space and time entangled.⁷ This relational space indicates how 'external influences get internalised in specific processes or things through time'. In this conception, identity becomes 'open, fluid, multiple, and indeterminate', which is 'immaterial but objective'. Moreover, this relational interpretation of space dissolves any binary relation such as feminine-masculine, West-East, and space-time (Harvey, 2009: 137). For Harvey, space cannot be defined as any one of these spaces, but 'it can become one or all simultaneously depending on circumstances' (ibid: 273-275).

Harvey's discussion points to the similar multiplicity of space discovered in Nishida's place. In the process of knowledge dissemination, once knowledge starts to travel into a foreign space, it is reinterpreted and internalised by locals in relation to that space, eventually becoming knowledge in a new context. This means that relational space and absolute space are linked through actions. When the locals interpret exotic knowledge by reading texts, they associate the unknown to the known in reference to their experiences in a particular space-place context. At the same time, the foreign knowledge *per se* contains its own ineffaceable tempo-spatiality. The negotiation with the text is seemingly carried out in absolute space. Simultaneously, it is linked to each actor's relational space(s) through actions. These actors may in turn imagine future spaces. The spaces are therefore not unified, but overlapping, leaving cognitive voids between the spaces and places. Such a reading would coincide with Massey's (1993) 'progressive concept of space', in which spaces are constructed

⁷ Nishida discussed Leibniz's monadology relatively often. See for example, Ishiki no Mondai

through continuous human actions, identified differently by multiple actors, and therefore have no boundaries except to overlap with each other. The spaces are characterised by their ‘highly complex social differentiation[s]’ (Massey, 1993: 62). What is needed is an ‘understanding of spatiality’ that ‘entails the recognition that there is more than one story going on in the world and that these stories have, at least, relative autonomy’ (Massey, 1999: 280-283).

The Japanese geographer Iizuka Koji, in his paper written in the late 1930s, argued that there are two ‘objective worlds’. In the first world, space is identified exactly as the actual size for everyone. By contrast, the second world is a relative world that is recognised by a specific subject as her world. Iizuka asserted that conceptions like the ‘expansion’ of the world is viable only in terms of the latter, in which the perceiving subject is however in most cases automatically assumed (Iizuka, 1936-37: 119). Some conceptualisations such as centre-periphery, most notably employed in Wallerstein’s world system theory, likewise rely on this assumption, since to decide where centre requires a clarification to the question ‘for whom’. Historically speaking, however, for a long time in the modern period, these two frames have dovetailed with each other, allowing Europeans to convince themselves and even others that their experiences were universal—a perception that, Iizuka held, had continued since the Age of Discovery. On the other hand, for most people in the rest of the world, ‘the first world’ had been beyond their imagination, and ‘the world’ simply referred to the space that they could understand empirically. In other words, the world had existed in plural without being significantly overlapped. Following the deepening interdependence of global economy and the diffusion of European geographical knowledge, a particular framing of space was believed to be universal, and the world was perceived as a singular unity, even though this in reality only reflected one specific (Western) worldview. A chorographic perspective relevant for a group of people became accepted as universal for a much wider audience, even though most of this audience did not share the same history and (by extension) perspective (Iizuka, 1935-36: 119-121; for a similar discussion, see Kōyama, 2001[1940]: 109).

As I have shown so far, any traveling theory contains a complex set of spatialities as it travels to another space. However, this convoluted spatiality has rarely been problematised in world politics, since the ‘original’ European spatial frame has been treated as the default representation of absolute space. As I have argued, the gap engendered by this complexity is never synthesised and exists in between actors. As

Harvey (2006: 277) suggests, only in the frame of relational space can we begin to grapple with the problematic of contemporary political subjectivity and political consciousness especially in terms of their multiplicity. In this relational conception of space, identity is multiple and entangled. When this is applied to my case study, then, the complexity becomes this: What did it mean for Japanese people during the first half of the last century to interpret European political theory so as to be simultaneously part of Asia and part of the West, to be both a coloniser and a liberator of colonialism?

A Community of Experience

Conceiving the spaces in relation to each other requires us to see the world as essentially divided, rather than as idealistically unified. This means that a courage to admit difference is crucial. As Nishida's theory indicates, only when we admit difference can we begin to envisage 'genuine universalism' (Dallmayr, 2004: 253) starting from the particular, without lapsing into an exhaustive pursuit for a truth that is suitable and applicable to everyone. Conversing about each people and each place enables us to avoid the seemingly perpetual binary, emphasising the uniqueness and the shared, communal nature of lived experiences. As Massey (1999: 279) contends, space here is understood as 'a source of disruption'. Agnew (2005: 92), drawing on Thrift (1999) and Jiménez (2003), points out that 'we always look at "the world" from somewhere, from a place. So, knowledge is always geographically contextual and reflexive. Space, then, is always and everywhere implicated in what people (and other entities) do and how they think, not just where they are'. Spaces are never monopolised by a specific actor, but always imagined differently by individuals who live in a specific space and gather into a community (or communities). Here, space has to be 'no longer a category of fixed and given ontological attributes, but a becoming, an emerging property of social relationship' (Jiménez, 2003; see also Agnew, 2005). It is understood as 'absolute locality' in Cavarero's term (2002: 526), absolute 'insofar as it is "freed" from the territoriality of place and from the historical dimension of time that we call tradition'. Concerned not '*what* those who share it are but *who* they are', space 'extends as far as the interactive space generated by those who share it. It is a relational space that happens with the event of this interaction and, together with it, disappears. Its place and time are therefore contingent and unpredictable' (Cavarero, 2002: 525). When identity is thus conceived not in relation to others but in relation to

place, it does not require homogeneity among the members (Sakai, 2000). What is needed is only the actor's own sense of belonging in relation to where and who she is.

Thus far, I have been employing Sassen's concept of territory, following her contention to make it as an analytical concept (Sassen, 2013). Relying on these discussions, the local community in which an exotic theory is interpreted is recalibrated as a 'community of experience', where every meaning contains a crystallisation of the experiences of the group (Mannheim, 1985: 22; Jones, 1997; see also Nelson, 1992). The core of this community is envisaged as a fragile imbrication of shared experiences, whose shared-ness is rarely ensured. Its structure is concentric, rather than bounded. As Massey suggests, what gives a place its specificity is not a historical narrative but the fact that it is the locus in which a particular constellation of relations is articulated (Massey, 1993: 66). The self, not the other, decides where to belong. In the composition of this community, geography plays a crucial role, since all experiences are embodied in a specific space. The human body is 'unique in playing a dual role as both the vehicle of perception and the object perceived, as the body-in-the-world which "knows" itself by virtue of its active relation to its world', being located always in a specific temporal and spatial configuration (Thrift, 1996: 13).

This community of experience is, following Schatzki (in Thrift, 1999: 311), a 'space of places at which activities can intelligibly be performed', where subjectivity can be captured as an *a priori* perception. However, it does not mean that this community has existed as a collective from the beginning. On the contrary, individuals exist in this space without being limited to the complete sharing of the same (inter)subjectivity, since each of them is affected by their own thoughts, concerns, and past experiences in their understanding of new events (Harvey, 2006). In the meantime, however, experiences are also communally shared through space (Maraldo, 2002). Thus, while it is possible to term a specific collective identity like 'Japanese' based on superficially shared experiences, it is in fact an aggregate of individuals who understand the same event in supposedly similar but intrinsically unique ways (Valentine, 1999: 48) in relation to their past experiences. Such identity is 'immaterial but objective' (Harvey, 2009). A collective is perceived as one in the unified place of spaces only through these hidden connections with multiple individual spaces. This community is essentially 'self-determined' in Nishida's sense and therefore dynamic. The community called 'Japan' appears to be relatively stable largely because of its history and geography which has separated the islands from other parts of the world,

although this condition is always in flux itself. Individuals come to be members of the community by living in a particular area and sharing their experiences. In this shared space, people incessantly define and re-define themselves, assembling often unconsciously around a nodal point where experiences are crystallised. In this space of ‘shifting terrain’ (Harvey, 2006: 277), human experience is embodied as knowledge when this ‘relationality connects to the absolute spaces and times of social and material life’, as Harvey (2006: 293) suggests. The space contains the capacity for agency to ‘com[e] about’ in the structure of meaning (Jiménez, 2003). Essentially, then, relation itself is agency (Nishida, 1926).

Three Analytical Spaces

The aim of this thesis is to explicate the mutation of power and subjectivity in the course of the voyage of political theory. What I want to know is what kind of geopolitical imagination is generated by the mutation of theory and in what way such geopolitical imagination affects the local spatial organisation. It is, shortly put, an inquiry into difference. To this end, I will modify Nakamura’s framework based on these three spaces: (1) space as a hidden intellectual standpoint; (2) the physical location where an actor is situated; (3) the symbolic space of imagination.

The first space is identified by considering the spatial context focusing on people’s everyday experience. It contains the past and the present. As attested by drawing on Maruyama’s concept of *basso ostinato* in the last chapter, a community shares a common understanding of power relation. As demonstrated by the discussion on Nishida’s *basho*, the Japanese had developed in the first half of the last century a particular epistemological tradition that had a subjectivist character, as the product of a context-dependent way of thinking stemming from an imported Confucianism. Imported texts are localised and interpreted through this power structure. In the process, what is important is *how* meanings are read and remade, rather than what the text means; a question of the way of interpretation, not that of description. This act of knowing by the locals generates often neglected cognitive gaps between the intellectual places between the author and the readers of the same text. However, as can be seen from the example of international law, these gaps paradoxically facilitate the acceptance of the concept, since different ideas are associated and abstracted with each other in the sameness. The inflection of theory does not yet come to surface, because the misunderstanding is rarely confirmed between different communities. At

the same time, *basso ostinato* is susceptible to change, as seen in the example of transatlantic relations discussed in the last chapter. The caveat is that this concept works as a heuristic device to calibrate the mutation of concept between spaces.

The second space is mainly analysable in terms of time, which different communities can to some extent share through big historical events like the World Wars. It can be largely observed by the concept of absolute space. In this space, knowledge is objectified. The mutation of theory is addressed by the question: Why do the local people need a specific knowledge at a specific point of history? The process can be observed in terms of the interactions and negotiations between regions, and is therefore easier to pin down. However, for the same reason, the transformation can be rather short-lived. As seen in the example of realist theory in IR, theory is subject to continuous change in this space in a more visible way than in the first space. However, it is crucial to be reminded that the two spaces are strongly related. The continuity of the first space underpins the change in a theory, and this change can be explained in the second space. The first space structurally penetrates into an actor's behaviour in this second space, controlling the formal negotiations covertly.

The third space is an imaginary world envisioned by a community of experience through partly relying on theories of foreign (mostly Western) origin. In this space, people's identities are essentially imagined but conceived in comparison with each other. Accordingly, an analysis focusing on this space tends to see identities as dichotomies. This perspective explains the bigger pictures in world politics, which is prone to be divided into binary oppositions such as the West and the East.

Inspired by Said's term 'imaginative geography' (1991: 49), critical scholars engaged in international politics, including critical political geographers, have investigated the latter two spaces intensively (cf. Soja, 1999; Howarth, 2000). Adding the first space which links the spaces, this thesis stresses the fundamental plurality of the three spaces. If, for example we accept that an event such as the World Wars does not carry the same meaning for all the communities in the world, or that a state like the United States is not imagined in the same manner by everyone in the world, then we must also accept that all three types of analytical spaces I have devised must be considered in plural. Even the second space is understood differently. The first space is nonetheless particularly important for the analysis of traveling theory, not just because it concerns the way of interpretation as I have demonstrated so far, but

because it can affect the rest of the two spaces in mostly unnoticeable ways due to its less-than-conscious character that works like bass notes underlying the main melody.

3.4. Conclusion

The aim of the analytical framework proposed in this chapter is to expose the subtle but substantial differences that traveling theory can generate but conventional comparative analyses tend to neglect. This chapter further clarified how elusive but at the same time crucial these differences can be, by explicating an epistemology nurtured in Japan. As stated in the discussion on the widely-regarded novelty of Nishida's paradigm change, the sort of difference I want to clarify is not one of culture in the old-fashioned sense (where differences of beliefs, values, and practices are emphasised), but one that is in fact composed by ubiquitous elements. This banality is important because it assists the global travel of knowledge, and potentially helps transform the knowledge significantly. The ubiquitous elements provide an abundant discursive reservoir that allows a different way of thinking to creatively interpret a theory into an indigenous context. Whether a theory is successfully localised or not is essentially contingent, rendering the map of traveling theory topological rather than topographical. Despite the contingency, however, or indeed because of the banality, the system of conversion is simultaneously stubborn to change, since it hardly comes to the surface and is therefore rarely rectified.

In Nishida's thought, it was *basho*, or place, that represented the universal. This inverse theorisation from Western epistemology is remarkable particularly in terms of how political space is organised, because with the emphasis being placed on the subjectivity of knowledge, the meaning of boundary becomes less important. The most problematic contribution of classical geopolitics to the theory of modern state is that it justifies the state's territorial expansion, and Japan was the sole non-Western country that was said to have applied the theory to its imperial expansion. The main topic of the empirical analysis discussed in the following chapters is therefore how Japan, as a community of experience, overcame this contradiction in the appropriation of theory, in an attempt to reorder the global space in their favour.

4 Identifying the Site of Creation

It was when Professor Ōtsuki said something quite astonishing. ‘There is no weed-grass in Europe, you know’. This was something very near to revelation to me; and it was at the point that I began to grasp what it is that distinguishes Europe’s climate.

—Watsuji Tetsurō, *A Climate: A Philosophical Study* (1961[1935]:¹ 60)

4.1. Introduction

The latter half of this thesis is devoted to the empirical investigation on Japan’s application of European geopolitics and the kind of geopolitical imagination Japanese people developed. The empirical research question of the present thesis is: How did Japanese people form their geopolitical imaginations by importing geopolitical theories of European origin?

As Edward Said (1982, 2001) reminds us, texts are restless travellers across times and spaces. In each destination, they can be read freely. Locals construe them selectively and contingently through practices, emotions, and reasons. However, what has been often overlooked is how locals creatively but often unwittingly inflect the text through the act of knowing. The previous three chapters have discussed this unrecognised difference. In order to attest the nuanced theoretical discussion I have developed so far, this chapter clarifies the scope of my empirical investigation. Among the theories of geopolitics, the present study focuses on the concept of the state as a living organism, which was elaborated by Ratzel in the late nineteenth century and has been the central tenet of geopolitics. I trace the migration of this theory from Germany to Japan with a brief detour via Sweden. Before I begin, there are a few caveats to be acknowledged. Although I have emphasised that this thesis is a collectivist account, the development of this theory in Europe will be traced as a history of individual intellectuals. In addition, I will deal with Japanese translations of German texts in my analysis of German geopolitics, due primarily to my lack of command in the German language. These two points however do not contradict with the aim of the thesis,

¹ A large part of the book was drafted in 1928 and 1929, while the whole book was first published in 1935. The quote is from the English translation of the book.

because the focus is on the theory recipient as a collective and their inflections, and not on the sender as a collective. In other words, I am only charting a small part of the much larger picture of the traveling routes of geopolitical theory.

Classical geopolitics is a theory that justified the Western way of organising world space (Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992; Ó Tuathail, 1996; Agnew, 2003). In particular, the concept of the state as a living organism represented by the idea of *Lebensraum* (living space) is said to be at the heart of German geopolitics known as the ideology of the Nazis, and that of the Japanese militarists since the Second World War. Although the term itself is rarely pronounced today because of the images that it conjures, the ideas implied in the concept have played a symbolic and somewhat contradictory role in world politics even until today. It was a symbol of scientific objectivity at some point in history, and even now is of a personified state in double meanings: one that continuously expands its territory for its survival and represents national unity, and the other that represents the universality of the state and therefore of the West. This image of the state is particularly valid in the so-called realist perspective of IR, as it explains why states fight wars against each other, such as in the two World Wars mainly fought among ‘Western’ states including Japan. Meanwhile, as demonstrated in the last chapter with Nishida’s *basho*, space was perceived in Japan rather differently during the period, with less emphasis on boundary than on centre in its subjective intellectual tradition in which place was prioritised. Moreover, wartime Japan’s ambition was to replace the Eurocentric world order with a new world order (cf. Schouenborg, 2012). The questions then become: How was the causes of war theoretically explained by the mutated geopolitical theory?

In order to bridge the theoretical discussion developed in the previous three chapters with the empirical study in the next two chapters, the first half of this chapter will return to the debates in critical geopolitics. To better situate the theoretical points I have raised, I suggest shifting the focus in current literature away from ‘boundary’ in conventional critical geopolitics to the inside of the state. I argue that by scrutinising the inside of a space, we can better understand the contradiction of geopolitical discourse: why it can be powerful for any geographical community even though theoretically it seemingly only serves for the powerful. The second half discusses the historical development of Japan’s geopolitical tradition and imagination in order to identify the site of creation for the import of geopolitics in Japan.

4.2. Tensions in Geopolitics

In the literature of critical geopolitics today, the concept of the state as a living organism is rarely discussed despite its centrality. Environmental determinism has been treated mainly in the context of Social Darwinism as a justification for imperial expansion based on white supremacist assumptions (Bassin, 1987a, 1987b, 2007; Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992; Ó Tuathail, 1996b, 1998). As critical geopolitics has focused on the discursive boundary-making practice of the Great Powers to expose the falsity of boundaries, it has rarely looked deeply into the concept of the state as living organism itself. However, this concept carries potential in demonstrating how locals come to imagine the modern state through the appropriation of not only geopolitics but also the Westphalian state system, and in unearthing such neglected difference in world politics.

Geopolitical Gaze

Ó Tuathail has argued that geopolitics as a ‘region of knowledge’ was forged by white male intellectuals and has composed a ‘common tradition of thought on international affairs’ regardless of national backgrounds and cultures. Classical geopolitics has three orientations according to Ó Tuathail: imperialism, Neo-Lamarckian white supremacist assumptions, and ‘Cartesian perspectivalism’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 21-23; see also Ashworth, 2014; Buzan and Lawson 2015: 52-53). Problematising the modern geopolitical subject that has monopolised power, he proposes to examine a ‘distinctive geographical gaze’ of the Great Powers. Thus, environmental determinism has been treated as illicit since it enables the Great Powers to arbitrarily draw boundaries on the globe. As a result, apart from research on Ratzel’s original conceptualisation of this concept (e.g. Bassin, 1987a, 1987b, 2007; Halas, 2014), studies on its evolution in the history of geopolitics were elided even within the wider discipline of political geography.

In the tradition of geopolitics, modern Japan’s position in world politics is bewildering for two reasons. First, it has been essentially a ‘viewed object’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b) for Europeans. As will be discussed in the coming chapter, the most notable geopoliticians—Ratzel, Kjellen, and Haushofer—have all studied Japan (with Haushofer being the specialist), stressing its abnormality from the European standard. Second, as I have argued so far, it cannot be presumed that the Japanese shared the European epistemic tradition. Indeed, the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō, in his seminal

work *Sakoku (National Isolation)* published in 1950, confidently concluded that what had been lacking in Japan was ‘the spirit of Henry the Navigator’ which required rational thinking (Watsuji, 1982[1950]: 304).² For him, this lack was the very reason the state of Japan lost in the Second World War. Contrary to Watsuji, scholars in critical geopolitics believed that this belief on rational thinking in geopolitics, which was disseminated to the world, was exactly what had to be rectified, if not rational thinking itself.

On the other hand, a largely forgotten historical fact in the post-war debates, particularly in the studies of world politics, was that the country of Japan aimed to construct a new regional world order during the war through establishing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACPS), which encompassed a popular aspiration to overcome not only the Anglo-American, but also the Western, world order in the widest sense. It was as if Japanese intellectuals, and not just the political elites, tried to combat all the -isms that were of modern European origin (including imperialism and capitalism), in its war rhetoric so as to establish this new order (Hiromatsu, 1989: 14-35). Japan’s alliance with Germany and Italy was not contradictory to this cause, since the intellectuals saw any racial difference as a socio-historical construction, as I have pointed out in the last chapter with Nishida’s thought and will further demonstrate later when discussing Japanese geopolitics. In this context, they were opposed not to the European race, but to the modern European ‘spirit’. For this struggle, the historical and geographical location of Japan became salient in their discourse.

In the late 1930s and 1940s, geopolitics enjoyed extensive development as an academic discipline in Japan (next to Germany), where translations of the most important texts from Europe³ were published, and there were tens of scholars, including several renowned academics, working in the field. Because geopolitics was so popular outside academia, it was even assumed during the Pacific War that literally all geographers had to be interested in geopolitics (Iizuka, 1946: 415).

Particularly crucial in relation to the agenda of critical geopolitics, Japanese scholars reversely employed geopolitical theories for a regional unity between non-

² According to Dower (1999: 492), the ‘connection between science and the “responsibility for the defeat” had become *idée fixe*’ in post-war Japan, particularly in terms of the experience of the two atomic bombs.

³ See chapter 5 for further details.

white people. In the debates of Japanese geopolitics, the Japanese race was considered a mixed race that shepherded Asians and possibly beyond, contrary to the prevailing post-war narrative portraying Japan as a pure-race nation. The Japanese scholars were hardly overwhelmed by European geopolitical traditions despite their assertive appropriation on the surface. What theories of geopolitics endowed them with was not the same ‘gaze’ of the ‘detached viewing subject’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 29), but the status as a viewed subject on a ‘worldwide stage’. In fact, the Japanese as a pure race was a newly constructed narrative from the final stage of the Second World War till the post-war period (Oguma, 1995), a geopolitical fact that has been curiously neglected not only in Japan but also in the West to date. This is not to argue that Japanese geopolitics was neither imperialistic nor oppressive. As history has shown, it unarguably was. However, the way in which Imperial Japan was oppressive was not at all the same as that in European imperialism. In this Japanese imperialism, the battle ground of geopolitics was not on boundary, but elsewhere. In fact, Japan fought the Second World War without having a clear intention to begin the war (cf. Hosoya, 2015: 139-153; Ōsugi, 2007). It was rather in the ‘deprivation of the World [view]’ that Japan plunged into the war (Suzuki, 1990: 46). By excavating this neglected history, the present study argues that Japanese scholars employed geopolitics by interpreting its environmental determinism as an ecological fatalism in line with their own mode of power. This was accomplished as they insisted on their own geopolitics and articulated a discourse of the Japanese self who was inclusive. In this context, the war was, for Japan, not a struggle for survival, but one for ‘co-prosperity’ in its most literal sense. In order to provide a basis to attest this argument, I propose in the following to displace the focus of analysis from ‘boundary’ to ‘inside’, by reviewing existing discussions in the literature.

The Modern Geopolitical Imagination

Agnew’s concept of ‘geopolitical imagination’ captures better the capability of geopolitics to be employed by the non-Western world. The modern geopolitical imagination is defined as the state-centric ‘view of the world and its geographical workings that accompanied the rise of the state and capitalism in Europe and that was both situated and informed the European encounter with the rest of the world’ (Agnew, 2003: 135; see also Ó Tuathail, 1998a). Concerned with the question ‘what “made some representations more powerful than others”’, Agnew (2013) distinguishes

between geopolitical order and geopolitical discourse (Ó Tuathail 1998b). He elaborates ‘geopolitical order’ as the history of the evolving ‘modern geopolitical imagination’ originated from Europe in the early nineteenth century and diffused to the world. He identifies three distinctive ages: civilisational, naturalised, and ideological geopolitics. ‘Geopolitical order’ is for Agnew the history of transformation of these three geopolitical hegemonic views on territorial states. He states that in this history, modern European states and their followers acquired ‘the sense of a world-as-a-whole’.

Relying on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, Agnew further argues that the state-centric and hierarchical world map as the commonsensical understanding of the world has been widely disseminated ‘[f]rom Brasilia to Seoul and from Cairo to Beijing’, although it has ‘never exercised absolute power over the course of world politics’ (Agnew, 2003: 9). Given that the political practices of the Great Powers have diffused all over the world, political elites of these powers have, throughout the modern period and until quite recently, monopolised the power of organising the world map by arbitrarily drawing territorial boundaries. It follows that the modern geopolitical imagination, as one of ‘Europe’s most popular exports’ to the world, has composed an ‘ideological space’ in which the world is ‘actively spatialized’ based on a set of common political practices and understandings (ibid.: 3-9, see also Agnew, 2013).⁴ From this perspective, Japan, as an offshoot of the modern European nation-state, followed the European imagination by affirming the European claim of ‘universal knowledge that transcends any particular national, class, gender or ethnic standpoint’ (Agnew, 2003: 94). During the period of naturalised geopolitics (à la Agnew), the Great Powers were divided into two camps. One of them consisted of Japan, with Germany, and saw the geopolitical space ‘as a natural zone divided into imperial and colonised peoples, states with “needs” for space and markets, a closed world in which one state’s gains meant another state’s loss, and a world of fixed environmental conditions and resource distributions that had determining effects on a state’s global status’. Agnew insists that this view later was spread wide (Agnew, 2003).

This historical perspective, however, also falls short of explaining the Japanese geopolitical puzzle. As I will show later, the brutality of Japanese imperialism was not

⁴ For a recent discussion on the conception of hegemony in the field of international relations in relation to Asia, see for example Lee (2016).

that it excluded the colonised people, but that it forcefully included them by paradoxically arguing for the socio-historical construction of any racial as well as geographical categories. This shortcoming is due to the fact that Agnew sacrifices plurality of practices despite his attempt to guarantee the multiplicity of history by noting that there has been no absolute domination. Employing Gramscian hegemony and accordingly placing emphasis on socialisation, his assumption must dictate that the whole world is structured in a single epistemic logic intelligible among international organic intellectuals. This brings the risk of elucidating the European history of expansion as *the* world history, despite the crucial importance he assigned to the word ‘imagination’. Differently put, although ‘imagination’ is essentially a self-reflexive act, ‘hegemony’ requires domination over the other, and this contradiction could expunge the subjectivity of the imagination. Agnew’s view is possible only when popular consciousness within each community is left out of sight. Unwittingly erasing spatiality and diversity in the history of world politics, his view depicts the rest of the world as passive and static victims, or at best subservient followers, of the Imperial West (Ó Tuathail, 1998a: 17-18). The root of this problem is that Agnew’s concern, like Ó Tuathail’s, is on boundary essentially, which is somewhat contradictory to his assertion for geographical diversity (e.g. Agnew, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2016). That is, in an attempt to argue for the suppressed ‘true’ diversity (see Ó Tuathail and Dahlman, 2011: 14), both Ó Tuathail’s and Agnew’s accounts end up stressing the homogeneity in the way of understanding international politics. Bearing this pitfall in mind, this thesis attempts to show that the modern understanding of world politics, though superficially based on Western knowledge, has itself been not so oppressed to be monolithic, but rather substantially diverse.

Geopolitical Missions

Nonetheless, this nuanced debate involving two prominent scholars in the field gives important indications on how to expand the field of investigation outside of the West. Let us look at how power is conceptualised in these two accounts. Ó Tuathail, claiming that ‘[g]eography is about power’ (1996: 1), describes the geopolitical discourse by the Great Powers (especially the United States) as a boundary-drawing practice that erases any historico-cultural difference in world politics. Despite his mentioning about the ‘messiness’ of world history (1996b: 73), he unwittingly depicts geopolitical knowledge as a means of domination as he speaks of the suppressed plurality. By

contrast, Agnew employs the concept of hegemony to emphasise the socio-economic aspect and stress the role of common political practices. Here, the power is conceptualised as plural, i.e. ‘not a singular entity but [one that] can involve so-called *soft* forms of consent as well as *hard* forms of coercion’, which ‘can be more diffusely distributed among all the actors’ (Agnew, 2003: 57, emphasis in original). Still, the plurality is not fully confirmed since he assumes that power is imagined in the same manner in any community. Even though he warns of the danger of a ‘territorial trap’, in which power in international politics is identified exclusively in the form of state power as a bounded space, he consequently posits that this power of the state is perceived equally everywhere as long as the idea of the modern state is accepted. However, because concepts are ‘not ideational’ but ‘rather are actual physical arrangements’ (Barad, 2003: 820), the arrangements can be transformed and the relationality differently comprehended when concepts are implanted to a foreign space, as the idea of *basso ostinato* has demonstrated in chapter 2. Thus, although Agnew has pointed out different modes of power, he does not pay attention on the site-specific character of power. Because power is defined relationally by political practices in a community, the putative ‘state power’ can be actualised differently.

Still, Agnew’s view bespeaks an important function of geopolitics that Ó Tuathail’s view underestimates. Agnew’s scheme of thought implies that geopolitics, despite its ostensibly imperialistic and deterministic character, has the capability to be accepted by any people. The only qualification for becoming a geopolitician is the appropriation of the concept of modern nation-state, regardless of the way of appropriation. This point has been further elaborated by Dijkink (1996, 2004) and some others (e.g. Rosenboim, 2014). They argue that the efficacy of geopolitics as a category of political thought is that it could represent a specific worldview developed in a spatial community based on shared experiences, endowing the community with a ‘missionary aim’ (Dijkink, 2004: 462). Therefore, Geopolitics is a discourse that ‘describes and evaluates a country’s position in the world’ (Wusten and Dijkink, 2002: 20). They go on to argue that rather than discerning the global history of geopolitics, studying local historical settings that give rise to a particular geopolitics through a comparative perspective (Wusten and Dijkink, 2002) could allow us to discern a more nuanced imaginative world map of political power (Dijkink, 1996: 4). The first question for this project, then, is how geopolitics as a powerful knowledge is differently actualised,

allowing them diverse spatialisations, even if it would ultimately articulate an ostensible hegemonic power.

As I have argued, this power of knowledge is not inherent in a particular agent, but emerges in between agents in the dissemination of knowledge. Rather, such power is enunciated through actions performed in each space in relation to each *episteme*. In this way, relation itself becomes agency (Nishida, 1926). As Karen Barad (2003: 822) argues, '[n]either discursive practice nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior'. However, even if it is ostensibly constructed inter-subjectively, it cannot therefore be posited that the perception is 'shared'. In an inter-regional setting, because of the unsynthesisable cognitive void (see chapter 2), agency becomes powerful and even random on the surface. Because power emerges out of partly unintentional and unrecognised relations among multiple actors (which in fact contain disagreements), it has a factuality that is only tacitly acknowledged among the actors in their own ways. However, or indeed because of this less-than-conscious character, the relations themselves are difficult to dismiss. Therefore, as Barad (2003: 819) argues, discourse is 'not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said'; 'statements and subjects emerge from a field of possibilities. This field of possibilities is not static or singular but rather is a dynamic and contingent multiplicity'.

Geopolitical Imaginations

Jason Dittmer (2014: 386) points out the existence of 'macro/micro scalar tensions' in the debate of geopolitics. By paying attention to the mediating effect of power, however, this thesis considers them not as tensions, but as relations (Dittmer and Dodds, 2008: 449) through which the field of possibilities emerge. Micro disagreements supported macro agreements in the course of travel for a political theory. On a micro level, geopolitics must be underlined by each worldview, often crystallised as a mission in a spatial community. Yet when the scope is expanded to a macro level, an apparent hegemonic view can be observed as Agnew's and Ó Tuathail's accounts suggest. While for Ó Tuathail, this macro view is a discursive construction, Agnew's attempts to identify some 'reality' in the discourse by shifting the focus from text to order as a socio-historical phenomenon. The problem with Agnew's account is that when the concept of hegemony is introduced, micro-level differences are expunged. As it is assumed that the macro socialises the micro, and

accordingly the international overshadows the domestic, what become left behind are the question of epistemology and that of the subject of imagination (see also Valentine, 1999: 48). By contrast, the assertion for a particular mission for each state implies that each geopolitical community has a different understanding of their geopolitical power pertaining to their geography, despite the apparent socialisation. However, the sole focus on missions does not explain how a world order is formed. In other words, hegemony should not be analysed merely as the consensus of numerous views; rather, as Slater (1999 : 67) states, ‘the politics of representation is itself a terrain of contestation, within which what is remembered and forgotten will be moulded by counterposed imaginations and visions emanating from different sited of experience and subjectivity’.

Dittmer’s (2014) attempt goes beyond the scalar tensions by relying on assemblage thinking. He argues that geopolitics has been struggling with ‘the topic of materiality’. Whilst environmental determinism represents the materialist view in classical geopolitics, critical geopolitics deprecates such materiality as it relies on discourse analysis highlighting the big picture of the world (Thrift, 2000). On the other hand, recent contributions of critical geopolitics have uncovered the importance of a ‘bottom-up set of process’ (Dittmer, 2014: 386). Linking this process to complexity theory, Dittmer (2014) argues that assemblage thinking can help reconceptualise dichotomy as relationality. However, since his interest is in ‘posthuman geopolitics’, his consideration leans towards the inclusion of non-human elements in geopolitical thought rather than towards a thorough investigation of the fundamental tensions in geopolitics. He still shares the aspiration of the discipline to expunge boundaries by stressing the power from below, arguing that ‘by making a break with the exclusive hold of humanity on political agency, we open ourselves up to agencies unlinked to an intentional subject’ (Dittmer, 2003: 397; see Dittmer and Gray, 2010). However, a question I would ask here is whether this unintentionality is only for non-humans, while human activity is always intentional.

Incorporating the ‘micro’ into the ‘macro’ and eradicating boundaries do not resolve the tension Barad (2003: 807) calls representationalism, namely the belief that ‘there are representations on the one hand and ontologically separate entities awaiting representation on the other’. It is not boundary that produces discourse, for the two are in fact mutually constitutive of each other. As Allen (2012) suggests, the power that

emerges out of assemblages is not merely the sum of all relations. Rather, both power and subjects emerge from this relationality. Boundary is generated through discourse, but it does not represent the consensus. While the concept of the state apparently represents a macro agreement, the ways in which each state conceptualises this agreement would mean that micro disagreements in fact exist. At the macro level, the state represents power. However, the materiality of the state is supported by numerous and diverse micro views. Likewise, despite its mission in various senses, the term 'geopolitics' works as the frame of reference in world politics. In order to analyse this relationality, this thesis wants to examine the neglected subconscious realm of human beings and that which lies beyond official interactions. The macro and the micro are mutually supported and not in opposition to each other. What we should consider thoroughly is how they are related in whose consciousness, rather than by whom they are related (and represented). Moreover, the space of consciousness has to be envisaged in plurality. Following Mark Bassin (2004: 625-626), not only do we need to examine space as a discursive construction as writers of critical geopolitics do, but also to scrutinise the 'enduring appeal' of 'a primordial stasis inher[ing] in the very nature of geographical space'. For Bassin, geopolitics has been powerful because it 'means many things to many people'.

So far I have argued that there exists a neglected cognitive void which plays a significant role in global knowledge dissemination. In order to understand this hidden complexity, space has to be envisaged as relational spaces. On the other hand, people are connected through a unified space, as opposed to how it is envisaged in existing accounts as 'a nested hierarchy of differentially sized and bounded spaces' (Marston et al., 2005). These assertions are plausible only when it is assumed that all people in this world follow the same epistemology and live in the same unified space. With the exception of the missionary perspective, these assertions unwittingly postulate that the weaker follows the dominant political practices by readily abandoning their own way of thinking. The paradox here is that despite its aspiration, critical geopolitics in general has failed to expand its field of investigation beyond the West save a few notable efforts (e.g. Sharp, 2011). In order to expand its field of inquiry, geopolitical imagination has to be envisaged in plurality. Ó Tuathail suggests that geopolitics is 'inescapably cultural' and 'plural', while admitting that 'in exposing geopolitics as a convenient fiction, critical geopolitics reveals itself as a similarly convenient fiction of opposition' (Jones and Sage, 2010). Indeed, as next two chapter will demonstrate,

Japanese geopolitics, which opposed European geopolitics, was yet another convenient fiction. The issue, then, is not whether a geopolitics is fiction or not. As Maruyama (1969: 344) argues, 'it is our fate to live in a world where there are only various fictions and various designs'. Our task is first and foremost to investigate how the fictions operate. Geopolitics is a discourse, and not just a collection of texts, because it effectively produces 'the "subjects" and "objects" of knowledge practices' (Barad 2003: 819). However, the condition shown by the discourse to each actor is not only historically but also geographically situated. The importation of a concept is not accompanied by practices that originally forged it. On the contrary, the concept is apprehended through local practices. The putatively same imagination in the world stage that is considered to be a product of knowledge dissemination is in fact an ephemeral projection made out of different comprehensions. In order to observe this ephemeral constellation, and in order to understand its obstinacy *and* elusiveness, we ought to carefully examine what stays the same and what becomes different for each actor.

This contradiction in geopolitics is analogous to that in neoliberalism identified by Ong (2007). She asserts that there are two neoliberalisms: Neoliberalism and neoliberalism. The former, with a big 'N', is seen in critical analyses as a 'unified state apparatus', a 'dominant structural condition' which overwhelms people like a tsunami. By contrast, the latter is a 'migratory technology of governing that interacts with situated sets of elements and circumstances'. This neoliberalism with a small 'n' fosters 'self-actualizing or self-enterprising subjects' and compels less the 'norm of efficiency' in emerging countries in Asia. For example, in China and Singapore, it was not necessarily the IMF or the World Bank but their governments that approved the technology of governing. Following Ong, I want to analyse geopolitics in the small 'g', which travels as a technology traversing different structures. Because it is a technology, the ways it is used depend on individual communities. From a certain perspective, the phenomenon might be compared to a tsunami that engulfs everything. However, when the point of view is displaced to somewhere else, it becomes a technology that can serve for everyone in line with their various needs. Neoliberalism is in this sense powerful, because it works as a technology for all, even if in different ways.

To date, critical geopolitics has regarded the Anglo-American worldview as the hegemonic view. As far as the purview of this thesis is concerned, to 'undermine the

tacit assumption of US (or Western) universalism' (Dodds et al., 2013: 8) must mean to treat it thoroughly as only one of the many possible narratives. What constructed the world was not only the ascendant American Mission, but numerous missions of many states altogether. Even a Super Power has to be treated as *a* state and not *the* state (Agnew, 2017). This plurality is not found in representation, but in the everyday, or the 'little things' as Thrift (Thrift, 2000; MacDonald, 2006) argues. That is to say, representations in world politics are not the product of a single dominant political practice, but a mere elusive point of node appearing in relation to diverged practices.

A promising way to tease out this neglected plurality is to investigate how a concept as 'specific physical arrangements' (Barad, 2003: 814) is mutated as it travels globally. The concept relevant in this discussion is, of course, the state as a living organism, because it is this concept that represents the power of geopolitics. As Paasi (1990: 56) points out, the essence of classical geopolitics rests on 'the unity of the state and man'—or to adhere to Ratzel's original intention, it is on the unity of *land* and man (Iizuka, 1935-36). However, the ways of uniting the two have to be diverse at different times and spaces. The plurality of geopolitics can be clarified by examining this point of departure. How the unity is arranged depends on the community of experience. Nonetheless, once the community accepts an exotic theory, it will start weaving intricate relations with the outside world. Strictly speaking, those that are involved in this interaction are not the agents *per se*, but the effects, and such interactions can also be left unacknowledged by the agents.

The State as Kokka

Agnew (2003: 52) insists that modern Europe has diffused the idea of the state to the rest of the world with the new social science, offering non-Western people the territory of modern statehood as 'a fixed and reliable template for their investigations into a wide range of phenomena'. However, the template had to be paid for, since any act of knowing requires a foundation. Japan, the first non-Western Great Power, has been assumed to be a wilful participant in the Eurocentric world order, employing the template successfully and accordingly sharing the same values with the West. In this way, Japan joined the World Wars as a struggle among states. However, even a brief examination would indicate that the adoption of the template was only nominal, and the Westphalian model 'has never an accurate description' (Krasner, 1995) of its entity.

In Japan, the state is translated as *kokka*, where the two Chinese characters mean country (*kuni*) and home (*ie*) respectively. According to Ogawa (1928a), the term could be dated back to China's Warring States period (403-221 B.C.). Before the Meiji Restoration, *kuni* signified the domain of a *daimyō* but not Japan itself, although the notion of Japan as a geographical community could be traced back to the eighth century. Even in modern Japanese language, *kuni* often indicates one's hometown, which is often not Tokyo. This means that there can be numerous *kuni* in Japan. Moreover, when Japan was established as a modern state in the late nineteenth century, it was the Emperor, who had been more a cultural symbol than a political one for five hundred years under the long *samurai* reigns (Watsuji, 1948). He came to 'restore' his throne, wearing Western clothes (Oguma, 2000), and the 'rebels' who supported the throne were the same *samurai* class. In other words, Japan did not undergo any actual revolution in the Western sense in course of establishing the modern nation-state. Some communists argued that Japanese capitalism was a 'militaristic half-feudalism' in which the Emperor was the absolute monarch, while other schools insisted that he was a symbol of national unity.⁵ Hence, it can be argued that Japan's national consciousness was the product of 'an organised mobilisation of traditional society', and not that of an awareness of nation-ness among the Japanese (Maruyama, 1964: 163).

In addition to this historical-cognitive divergence, physical factors must also be considered. Maruyama Masao pointed out that the political elites in follower states like Japan had to confront a paradoxical project once they decided to establish a European-style modern state: whilst the establishment of the state rested on the claim of universality of the European system, it was simultaneously given the task of maintaining a unique quality of nationhood, whose trait has to be essentially distinguished from Europe. In order to achieve these highly contradictory tasks, latecomers have to select elements of European modernity based on their needs and wants, instead of mimicking it as a whole, while simultaneously claiming their full attainment of modernity. The aspiration for particularity is likely to end up with emphases on the nation's unique traditional moral values, and/or a restoration of a specific part of its history, all of which are attempts to overcome the apparent spatial

⁵ This became a big debate known as the 'Nihon Shihonshugi Ronsō' (Debate on Japanese capitalism) in the 1930s (Koyama and Yamasaki, 2014[1947]).

and temporal superiority imposed by the West (Maruyama, 1986: 43-56). As a result, the narrative of the modern state for these newcomers becomes a complex mixture of the past and the future, the universal and the particular. The most useful resource for the latecomers in the process of establishing the state is their geography, for it is where the power of the idea of nation-state rests. Geography here is not something simply 'out there', but a 'space as a capacity', 'capable of changing' (Jiménez, 2003: 140), and 'argues' for their nation-ness (see Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 21).

In this way, the state as a template has been deformed into various rearrangements as it is disseminated around the world. In Japan, the *Gesellschaft* was not a replacement of *Gemeinschaft*; instead, the state was a metamorphosis of *Gemeinschaft*. The modern state in Japan was not the 'mentor' of the people (Agnew, 2003: 52), but rather that of the 'feudal' elites who restored the Emperor's throne to *continue* their reign. Of course, this feudalism was not exactly the same as that in Europe. The geopolitical concept of the organismic state was understood on this basis. The concept of the state in Japan was never an importation but the fruit of repeated integrations of knowledge. Therefore, the way Japanese people imagined their state must be distinctive. Far before the importation from Europe, the term *kuni* had already developed its own textuality in Japan. The traditional term was transformed into a modern notion when the country came to be a modern state, yet also evidently retaining all its historical connotations. At the same time, the imported notion also carried its own historicity in Europe. To be sure, the transformation was accepted as something new in Japan. However, the acceptance was due not only to its novelty, but more to a certain familiarity already attached with term. As the renowned poet Kitamura Tōkoku ridiculed, the Meiji Restoration was 'not a revolution but a transition' (Kitamura, 1893[1969]). This indicates the existence of the unsynthesisable in the concept, which is rarely noticed but has helped the local Japanese to connect themselves to the globe. The supposedly imported concept of the state, then, stood on this complexity, and to understand this complexity, we need to move 'away from studying origins and originalities' (Bilgin, 2016: 141).

As I will explicate in detail in the upcoming chapters, Japanese people developed from the European canon a different understanding of the territory of the modern state. The specificity of this alternative understanding could most evidently be seen in the interpretation of the organismic theory of the state, which asserted that the territory of the state was not bounded. When this particular understanding was linked to the

theories of geopolitics, a unique mission of Japan came to the fore: that the modern states would soon dissolve into regions, rendering the world ultimately one. This particular understanding of statehood had contributed to the popular fascination and support for Japan's entry in the Second World War, since it allowed not only geopoliticians but also notable thinkers to argue for a perpetual war, in order to accomplish their mission of organising a regional world anew.

Allen has argued that all powers 'have the potential to be actualised differently depending upon the relations of which they are a part and such arrangements may even throw up new capacities' (Allen, 2012). The boundaries of a representation work in a space only when they make sense for people in that space, and neither because they are forcefully claimed from the outside nor because the people have mastered the meaning. Even if 'state borders' are a seemingly indisputable element of state power in a particular space, they can be marginalised or may even disappear in another space. If 'concept' is an 'arrangement' as Barad has claimed (mentioned above), its components can be rearranged by different practices as it travels. Drawing on Allen (2012: 192), this re-arranged object is 'the emergence of a phenomenon that was not evidenced before and not reducible to the combination of pre-existing objects'. Therefore, each subject envisages the world differently although the lens through which they do so, i.e. the state, may be a superficially identical template. There is no ultimate consensus on the identity of the state, because the way to imagine the state is always governed by local practices. Rather than accusing the strong states of being the power holder, we need to investigate each thread in the entanglement in its own right by consulting each method of inquiry developed in each space.

4.3. Imaginative Geography

Proposing an inward turn for analysis, this section elucidates how people in modern Japan have historically understood their space in relation to the outside. In *Orientalism*, Said (2003: 54) states that 'imaginative geography of the "our land-barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for "us" to set up these boundaries in our own minds; "they" become "they" accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from "ours"'. Hence, it was in fact Western identity that was being developed through the othering of the Orient (Howarth, 2000: 67-70). Conversely, Chris Browning (2010: 33) argues that the West as a mode of analysis was essentially

a construction by outsiders, rather than something that came into being through the Westerners' search for the self. In addition, Alastair Bonnett (2004: 65-66), analysing the discourses in Japan and Turkey in the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, points out that the West in non-Western discourses apparently had multiple sites of 'creation and tension', and that these sites were not a 'synthesis' or 'hybrid' developed in between the actors but belonged to the non-West (see also Aydin, 2007: 191). This means that it was essentially 'the other', not 'the self', that has imagined not only the Orient but also the West, and such imagination was not necessarily shared by 'the self'. In other words, in the site of imagination, multiple discourses are at the outset in search of difference with 'the other' in order to identify 'the self', though without direct confrontations and communications. These sites are essentially closed and not interactive, as their counterparts are also caught in their own imaginations. However, in the real world, these sites still have to be connected with each other.

Japan's experience shows that in these multiple sites of selves, the modes of inquiry are also diverged as each community holds a unique epistemic tradition. For Japanese people particularly in the modern period, the differentiation process started from the question of 'who we are', instead of 'who they are', reflecting the subjective tendency in their epistemology which was nurtured from a history of constant knowledge importation. This particular mode of inquiry evolved not only from Japan's secluded historico-geographical condition but also from the Japanese language. This section argues that as the Japanese deepened their inquiry through the assertive appropriation of modern European knowledge, a sense of unique national mission in relation to geography emerged. The emergence was not a discursive differentiation between the self and the other (Campbell, 1998; Doty, 1996; Neumann, 1999; Rumelili, 2004; Hansen, 2006; Browning, 2008; Solomon, 2013; Hagström, 2015), but a performative construction of 'self-image' (Shih, 2013) without drawing clear boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. In a topological landscape with multiple selves, Japanese people found sameness, rather than difference, in others, and linked such sameness to the self. Despite the elusiveness, it was this act that drove them to confrontation against the West, as they began to believe in their mission to change the exclusively Eurocentric world order into a more inclusive world order.

Japan: The Repository of Civilisations

The continuous assimilation of knowledge for more than a millennium—first from China and then from Europe and the United States—cultivated a strong sense of mission in Japanese popular geopolitical imagination by the end of the nineteenth century. Uchimura Kanzō was an Evangelical Christian thinker who studied general science in the United States. In his popular book *Chijinron (On Geography and People)* first published in 1894, he asserted that the Japanese archipelago, whose shape was like a goddess ascending towards heaven (*ten-nyo*), was given the mission to be a mediator between the West and the East. According to his insistence, some of the main ports located on its eastern shore were opened towards the United States, whilst some others were towards China. Hence, Uchimura declared, ‘when the fleet of ships from the United States had arrived in Uraga and asked with civility and dignity to open the ports, that was the moment the mediator between the West and East met her robust and high-potential groom’ (Uchimura, 1897: 205).⁶

Similarly, the art historian Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin), who claimed that ‘Asia is one’ in his book *The Ideals of the East: With Special Reference to the Art of Japan* (first published in English in 1903⁷), insisted that Japan was ‘the real repository of the trust of Asiatic thought and culture’ (Okakura, 1920: 3-5). In Japanese temples, he found influences from China as well as India, many of which had already been lost in their origins. For Okakura, the various cultures of Asia became a ‘unity in complexity’ in the land of Japan by the special faculties of the Japanese race, developed from its mixed blood history and from the unique geographical location of the archipelago which had not allowed any foreigners to invade.

Thus, they argued for the universality of Japanese values based on the geographically reclusive character of its islands, explained through the lens of human progress and evolution *in toto*. However, as Mitani Taichirō argues, this contradiction was not unique to Japan, but could be found also in Wilsonianism. The end of the nineteenth century was characterised by the rise of America in relation to the fall of Europe. According to Mitani, the rise of the ‘New World’ was perceived in Japan as

⁶ Nakano (2011) classifies Uchimura as part of the school of ‘Japanese Humanism’. I acknowledge this classification, but Uchimura’s humanism is, I think, better understood in the wider context of the humanistic tendency seen in modern Japanese thought, which is distinguished from European humanism. As Rob Walker (1993: 16) asserts, ‘humanity as such is not a meaningful political category’. Both Takagi (1942) and Yamaguchi (1943) named Uchimura as a forerunning ‘geopolitician’.

⁷ The Japanese version was published later in 1939.

the advent of relativism in line with the decline of the 'Old World'. America was understood as an opposing force to Europe, and its rise did not mean another vindication of the universality of Western values. The uniqueness of the state that brought the United States to the leading position in world history was comprehended in relation to its geography rather than to its race (Mitani, 1974: 125-154). In this respect, environmental determinism essentially contains a dualistic character, the interpretation of which depends on where the reader is.

Social Darwinism was accepted in Japan under this wider contextual change in world history. Katō Hiroyuki's controversial work *Jinken Shinsetsu* (1882)⁸ was the earliest and an extreme example of this Japanese apprehension of a relativising world. In it, he vigorously asserted that natural human rights were just a 'fantasy' of Rousseau and had to be rectified by Darwinism. He maintained that international relations, which until that point had been confined to like-minded societies of the European Great Powers, would soon become 'the society for all the peoples in the universe'.⁹ The newly emerged power of the United States at that point was the vindication of this development. In this particular imagined atlas, the state was located on the other side of the globe when seen from Japan, but it was not in the West.

In this way, during the Taishō Democracy in the Taishō Period (1912-1926), when the two-party political system entered a time of maturation, the rise of the United States was equated to the universality of democracy *per se*. Following the Wilsonian understanding of democracy, intellectuals in the Taishō period saw democracy as 'an organic development of human life' rather than a polity (Mitani, 1974: 133-139). Together with Social Darwinism, the universal claim of democracy contained a geographical particularity in itself. Since democracy presented a possibility of winning in this relativising world, it showed hope, rather than harsh reality, to the Japanese as a coloured race. It was only in 1943 when the geopolitician Komaki Saneshige urged his peers to think of the United States as being located 'at the other side of Africa, the west of Japan' and not the other side of the Pacific Ocean (Komaki, 1943), thus inverting the world map. Therefore, in the beginning of the last century, the decline of Europe accompanied by the rise of America, as well as Japan's own victory in the Russo-Japanese war, was for the Japanese people a strong vindication of this universal

⁸ The title can be translated as 'A New Theory of Human Rights'.

⁹ This statement should not be understood as an idealist statement, since the whole tone throughout the book is rather cynical and sarcastic.

organic development materialising across the globe, which would go on to foreshadow its relative superiority across the Pacific Ocean. For the Japanese, their contribution to this organic development was a gift of their unique geography.

Invention of 'the East', 'the West', and 'the South'

As the Japanese envisaged their islands as a repository of civilisations with two manifest others as their 'faceless' teachers, the imaginative geography in Japan in the beginning of the last century came to be a space of multiple selves and others. The country invented not only the term '*Tōyō*', which is better translated as 'the East' compared to 'the Orient', as it was a malleable geographical term for including and identifying Asians in contrast to not only 'the West' (*Seiyō*), but also 'the South' (*Nanyō*) and the North (*Hokuyō*). Accordingly, Japan's site of creation of the self became messy.

Whether the label 'the West' has any substance or not is an ongoing debate in Western academia especially after the end of the Cold War (Gress, 1998; Jackson, 2006; Hall and Jackson, 2007; Browning and Lehti, 2010; Katzenstein, 2010; Hellmann et al., 2014). However, for the Japanese, the debate on the social construction of the East has been almost a century old and yet to be abandoned. In the 1930s and 1940s, the idea of the East became the centre of the debate in national identity. Tsuda's work introduced in chapter 2 is a case in point. In a foreword to a book written in 1947, he noted that his motivation for the work was to attest the uniqueness of Japanese culture by arguing for the social construction of '*Tōyō*'. In opposition to the mainstream opinion during wartime which saw the East as primordial, as seen in Okakura's contention mentioned above, Tsuda argued for the constructedness of the East. He asserted that the term *Tōyō* came from China, which originally indicated that which stood in the east of China (i.e. Japan in most cases). Moreover, the Chinese character *yō* means ocean, not land. He argued that during the Edo Period, as *Seiyō* came to signify Europe, *Tōyō* respectively became a geographical term that spelled Asia as a whole. Hence, *Tōyō* was a Japanese creation (Tsuda, 1936). Yamamuro (2000: 36) further points out that it was Arai Hakuseki who first used *Seiyō* to indicate Europe in Japanese in his book published in 1715; however, such usage was not widely seen until the late nineteenth century, when Westernisation, considered to be synonymous with the West, had diffused to a broader level in Japanese society.

What is important for this thesis, however, is not the constructedness of the concept, but the fact that the ideas of the three ‘yō’ had a remarkable signification in Japan’s inquiry of the era. For any of the signifiers, the signified changed constantly depending on context. Even the East, this hastily invented anti-notion of the West for the purpose of indicating the Japanese selves, worked as a kaleidoscopic site of creation, in which its identity constantly fluctuated. In the 1930s when tension was rising towards the Second Sino-Japanese War, *Tōyō* became a fashionable term, enjoying popularity as Japan had built up hostility against the West. Furthermore, in addition to *Tōyō* and *Seiyō*, modern Japan coined the terms *Nan-yō* and *Hokuyō*, which only rendered the site even more complex. Whilst *Hokuyō* remained a mere geographical designation with very limited indication of the sea around Hokkaidō, *Nan-yō*, which originally largely referred to the islands in the Pacific, came to be an enigmatic fusion of both the ‘realist’ self and the ‘idealised’ other. Nonetheless, curiously, *Nan-yō*, together with *Daitōa* (Greater East Asia), became a forgotten ‘geopolitical’ vocabulary in the post-war landscape.

Nan-yō: A Fusion of the Self and the Other

In the imaginative geography of wartime Japan, it was the forgotten term *Nan-yō*, rather than *Tōyō* or *Seiyō*, that played a considerable role, embodying the confusion of the identities between the self and the other. It was significant not because it effectively crystallised the self, but because it was elusive enough to expunge the difference between the two. Already being used in discourses during the Meiji Period, *Nan-yō* was an extremely versatile notion which enkindles mystical but intimate spatial imagination (Yano, 1975). As *Nan-yō* moved to the centre of Japanese popular consciousness and came to be seen as the space to which the state had to expand (*Nanshinron*, or the Southern Expansion Doctrine¹⁰), it came to function as an ideology, signifying both fantasy and anathema. Despite the reality that it was a target for imperial expansion, *Nan-yō* was depicted, more metaphorically than realistically, as the place where young people were heading for their dream and where the Japanese originally came from (Kiyono, 1942; Komaki, 1942; Muroga, 1944). In popular

¹⁰ The oldest example of *Nanshinron* can be seen in *Bōkaiaku* written by Satō Nobuhiro (1769-1850) (Yano, 1970: 48; Hirano, 1942: 13-19). Sato is also considered to be a pioneer of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Hirano, 1942; Miwa, 1981: 199-200) and Japanese geopolitics (Ishibashi, 1942: 15).

imagination, the term *Nan-yō* is said to have been introduced first by the geographer and politician Shiga Shigetaka in 1887. Soon, it was presented as a romanticised heaven-like place awaiting the Japanese to explore in adventure novels for children, travel writings for adults, and advertisements for jobs in the Pacific Islands.¹¹ As Yamaguchi Sadao (1943: 110), relying on Uchimura, stated, the South was perceived as the meeting point of Westing and Easting of civilisations. During the war, *Nanshinron* became an official policy of Imperial Japan. After the Second World War, however, it turned into another taboo-like geopolitics term (at least formally) and was largely replaced by the more ‘scientific’ moniker ‘Southeast Asia’, to be reborn as a space for post-war Japan’s economic, but no longer political, expansion under the authorisation of the United States. In this context, Japan was a ‘beneficiary’ of the Cold War (Yano, 1975: 179). *Nan-yō* has since then become a marginalised research topic in history, politics, and geography in post-war Japan, with the exceptions of a few notable works mainly by area specialists of Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, although the designation is almost obsolete today, *Nan-yō* still provokes a rustic and warm-hearted image and used in popular films like *Godzilla* (1954), while *Tōyō* and *Seiyō* are still widely used even today.

Thus, *Nan-yō* was significant and convenient not because the term represented Japan’s other, but because it obscured the very target the Japanese were fighting against. It represented whatever that was contradictory: old and new, foreign and domestic, self and other, past and future, stagnation and progress. Right before the Second Sino-Japanese War, the journalist Murofuse Kōshin vigorously declared that *Nan-yō* was ‘a vast virgin land’ (Murofuse, 1936: 221), representing ‘Japan’s mission’, ‘the *tao* (*dō*, see chapter 2)’ that ‘the geographical nature’ dictated (ibid.: 255-261). The word embodied the end of imperialism and white supremacism’ (ibid.: 267), and for Murofuse, what would wipe out the European-ness—not Europeans *per se*—was the Japanese spirit and also not the Japanese *per se*. The Japanese spirit was seen as the alternative to the deteriorating European spirit in order to ensure a healthy human universal progress. Shiga Shigetaka, in his best-selling work published half a century before Murofuse’s, lamented the tyranny of white people in the Pacific Islands, and worried about the possible extinction of the yellow race as the result of

¹¹ In 1915, the Nanyo Foundation was established, and recently renamed as the Asia-Nanyo Foundation. The mission of the foundation was to ‘contribute global interests’ (<http://newicf.org/history.php>: accessed on June 3, 2015)

white domination. At the same time, however, he invited his coeval Japanese people to this 'big market' for the sake of the country's economic success—the solid establishment of Japan as a modern state with the support of Great Britain (Shiga, 1887). Shiga claimed that until his work was published, *Nan-yō* had not existed in Japan's popular imagination. As Japan's economy expanded, however, the world vision of Japanese people, gradually widened towards the Pacific. The key event for this development was when those Pacific Islands that were under Germany's control were given to Japan under a mandate in 1919. Thereafter, *Nan-yō* entered Japan's imaginative theatre of world politics, in which the Japanese would play the lead. However, an obvious difference from the Europeans, besides the fact that the islands were 'awarded' by the European-led League of Nations, was that the Japanese was a non-white race. In this sense, not neither the indigenous people in *Nan-yō*, nor the Europeans even, could be strictly objectified as 'the other'.

The dilemma surrounding *Nan-yō* was palpable also in the creation of the East and in the timing when the East as a concept came into the spotlight. Having broken away from China first intellectually, Japan then fought two wars against it. In this context, the East was for the Japanese a necessary, rather than just a convenient, fiction for these clashes. This was especially important in the Second Sino-Japanese war, since the Japanese had to reason that they were fighting the war not against Chinese people but for the union of Asians. This war was, for Japan, not a war between China and itself, but one that tried to save China from being tainted by the West, even though the irony was that Japan benefitted from the West's colonialism. A logic attempting to whitewash this conflict arose: For the Japanese, a 'just' order was *naturally* developed as the current world order led by the Europeans began to deteriorate, and the Europeans became Japan's enemy because their position was in opposition to Japan's in this 'just' world order. In this context, the Europeans were not inherently bad or different. Rather, for the Japanese, the locus of 'justice' had moved from Europe to Japan as a natural development of history. Any identity was, in the Japanese imagination, in progress (Morris-Suzuki, 1998), and the new order therefore had to be an evolving regionalism that would replace the modern European state system (Mitani, 1974: 254).

Differently put, following Ole Wæver (1996) though in a different context for a different subject, Europe became 'the other' for Japan not because the Europeans were the 'racial other', but because they embodied 'the past' of human progress in contrast

to the Japanese which represented the future. Here, the basis for otherness was sameness. For the Japanese, any identities are blurred and overlapping with another, and each of them contained a part of another while being simultaneously different. An identity was a mixture of the self and the other, and can never be clarified what it really was. All humans were equal in the sense that they would evolve in the same manner but at different speed in different space. Therefore, their security discourse was not drawn from the distinction between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, the domestic ‘us’ and the foreign ‘them’ (Walker 1993; Campbell, 1998; see also Agnew, 2015), but was instead distinguished between the past and the future of universal human progress.

Fate?

In this way, in the course of self-searching, the Japanese discourse oscillated between the universal and the particular. As they tried to understand themselves in the context of universal human history, they came to realise that the reason they were embodying universal history was their geographical peculiarity. Watsuji’s *Fūdo*, first published in 1935, is a case in point. More precisely, it was read in that manner by his contemporaries, probably against his will as it became a national classic. Later translated as *A Climate: A Philosophical Study*, *Fūdo*, literally meaning ‘wind and earth’, is Watsuji’s most well-known work. Reading Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit* in Berlin, he was haunted by the question why spatiality was not taken into account as part of the basic structure of existence while temporality was. The book was a pioneer of *Nihonjinron*,¹² as it vividly illustrated a ‘personality’ of the Japanese as a nation in relation to its natural environment, culture, and history in comparison with other races, thereby contributing to Japan’s mythology of its unique nationhood in the post-war era (Inoue, 1979). On the other hand, the book was also criticised as an example of environmental determinism (Iizuka, 1944; see also Inoue, 1979).

According to Watsuji, climate was ‘the agent by which human life is objectivised, and it is here that man comprehends himself’ (Watsuji, 1961[1935]: 14). This was because humans invented things for a purpose, and these inventions were inextricable from local conditions as well as customs developed under those conditions. To this end, he presented a threefold typology of people: monsoon, desert, and meadow.

¹² *Nihonjinron* (or discussions about the Japanese) is a genre of studies on Japanese national and cultural identity. For a comprehensive history of the literature, see Aoki (1999).

Europeans were of a meadow type, and the Japanese together with other East Asian countries, belonged to the monsoon type. Furthermore, he distinguished the particularity of the Japanese from other Asians, claiming that Japan's climate was 'by far the most distinctive within the whole monsoon zone' because of its duality: 'that of a tropical belt and that of a frigid zone'. For this reason, the Japanese had a conflicting character of 'a quiet savagery of emotion, a fighting disinterest' due to the constantly changing climate (Watsuji, 1961[1935]: 138), and were just not as receptive like the other monsoon people.

After his travel to Europe, Watsuji found his home country Japan strange. Western-style houses, cars and trams had been part of Japan's landscape, and, accustomed to seeing them, he did not find those in Europe new. He even witnessed the trams' 'skimpiness' in their place of origin, as opposed to the neat ones in Japan. After his return to Japan, he recognised that these things of Western origin sat in an odd equilibrium in his native landscape. The oddness was as if 'I was watching a wild boar rampaging through fields. When a tram surges through the houses that line the tracks, they seem to crouch and bow spiritlessly just as the commoner would grovel in face of a feudal lord's procession' (Watsuji, 1961[1935]: 158). The Japanese people, living in Western-style houses, had preserved their traditional way of living. Watsuji was interested in how spatial difference was elicited in intellectual life. He stated that Dilthey, for example, called Oriental art 'primitive' and 'semi-barbarous', even though what counted as 'Orient' was unclear (ibid.: 171). Watsuji was 'not unsympathetic to' such European romantic adoration for Asian earthiness, as he understood the Europeans' suffer from the 'mechanisation of life'. Yet, the Japanese, who followed the Europeans and pursued a similar sort of mechanical life, had at some point lost 'a great deal more of its "primitiveness" than has Europe' long before modernisation *qua* Westernisation (ibid.: 176). He argued that the Europeans would not appreciate this maturity of the Japanese, as they believed that Europe was the most progressive region in the world (ibid.). On the other hand, Japan's thirst for European science was, for him, a longing for the meadow type of people. However, immersing themselves in Western life, the Japanese were oblivious to the fact that Japan's climate could become neither a meadow nor a desert (ibid.: 117-118).

Japan, a viewed object of Europe, was about to transform into a viewing object by importing Western knowledge, particularly its science. However, this brought unexpected bewilderment to the Japanese. Although the Japanese actually shared with

the Europeans a nostalgia for the cultural ‘primitiveness’ of the Southern Islands, Watsuji believed that the Europeans would never distinguish between *Nan-yō* and Japan, and would simply consider Japan as part of the East despite Japan’s abandonment of Asia by the import of foreign knowledge. Moreover, the Japanese themselves still felt a sense of affinity to that primitiveness. Hence, Japan was all Eastern, Western, and Southern at the same time, but simultaneously none of them. Contrary to the West’s claim of objectivity, it appeared impossible for the Japanese to objectify themselves. Watsuji went on to say that despite the impossibility, the Japanese pretended to have successfully objectified themselves. However, being affected by Japan’s climate, the Japanese had retained a subjective inclination despite Western learning. Watsuji claimed: ‘The problem of such lack of discernment still faces the Japanese today’ (1961[1935]: 118). Indeed, this mixture of hollowness and pride in their distinctiveness led them to attempts of including others, which however brought about another identity crisis, since the claim for hegemony by stressing their superiority entailed a paradoxical differentiation inside the allegedly inclusive community. As Watsuji (1961[1935]) argued, although the Japanese were of *a* monsoon type among other monsoon types, they must be *the* monsoon type that was specially given the mission of vindicating universal human progress. After all, this had to be corroborated by their unique geography, because a combination of a particular geography and a particular people could not be replicated.

4.4. Conclusion

The modern state has been the node in the formation of world politics. As Agnew argues, it is at first glance the very template that has diffused from Europe to all over the world. However, this conceptualisation neglects the fact that Europe was not the only place that has historically developed a geographical community analogous to the state. As the case of Japan has shown, a theoretical template had to be re-interpreted into an indigenous concept in order to become knowledge. In this respect, although the nation-state is certainly an imagined community (Anderson, 2006), the way of imagining the nation-state must be diverse. Therefore, how the world of states as a whole came to be established is better observed only when the respective localisations of the concept are properly examined. Geopolitics is the theory that rationalises the power of the modern nation-state. The concept of the state as a living organism is a central idea of geopolitics that justified the expansion of the state. Together with

environmental determinism, it was considered to be a rationalisation of Western domination in the literature of geopolitics. However, to identify what it has rationalised in each destination as a traveling theory requires a detailed investigation. As the concept can be mutated by local practices, what the theory has justified can differ in each destination.

The discourse of the self in Japan in the first half of the last century began from the question of ‘who are we’, rather than ‘who are they’. This was not only because Japan was a viewed object for the West, but also because Japan’s intellectual tradition had a subjective inclination. With multiple selves and others whose boundaries were fairly blurry, Japan’s site of creation of the self oscillated between the particular and the universal. At the final step on the ladder towards the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Japanese people started to look for the meaning of their reason of existence in their geography. This historical development pushed Japanese people to interpret geopolitical theory as an inclusive idea, contrary to the so-called classical geopolitics superficially. The final two chapters will study how they transformed the theory.

5 The Importation of Geopolitics into Japan

The world is not a ladder and humankind is not a ladder climber. Today is not for tomorrow and tomorrow is not for the day after tomorrow ... European philosophy of progress bid us perpetual expense with perpetual swindle: We had to continue to follow a rainbow just like a child.

—Murofuse Kōshin,
Beyond Civilization (1927: 309)

5.1. Introduction

In *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (1996), Andres Stephanson writes:

To imagine one's national self in this exemplary manner is not unique to the United States. Every nation-state lays some claim to uniqueness, and some nations or empires, historically, have even considered themselves on Higher Authority the anointed focal point of world or universal history. Yet, for example, the dynastic 'Mandate' that legitimated Confucian China never envisaged a transcending 'end' of history through a fundamental change of the world in accordance with its own self-image. ... In the twentieth century, only one case compared to the United States in claims to prophecy, messianism, and historical transcendence: the Soviet Union (xii-xiii).

Here, he overlooks another example against which the United States fought a 'hot' war: Imperial Japan. The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Daitōa Kyōeiken*, GEACPS) was a grand design that aimed exactly to transcend the end of history. Theoretically underpinned by German geopolitics, and originally proposed by the established liberal political scientist and politician Rōyama Masamichi in 1938 though in a slightly different designation, it became Japan's official policy in 1941 mainly under the cabinet of Konoe Fumimaro, a popular social-liberalist politician and the heir of an aristocratic kin group. Although this regionalism has rarely been revisited squarely in studies of international politics to date (Schouenborg, 2012), it was

undeniably the most ambitious world vision presented by modern Japan and supported by popular imagination hitherto (Miwa, 1981).

Contrary to the popular perception today that it was a militarist policy, Miwa Kimitada (1981: 196-197) suggests that this policy conjured up ‘what might be called an idealistic yearning for Asia’ in popular imagination, with which people had been imbued for a long time. The *Daitōa Chiseigaku* as Japanese geopolitics enthusiastically buttressed this popular yearning. By interpreting the knowledge coming from Europe, Japan envisaged a confrontational modern geopolitical imagination against the West, and this vision was most eloquently represented in the idea of the GEACPS.

The initial application of German geopolitics in Japan was an empirical study on US immigrants in the Pacific, titled ‘The Truth of Racial Struggle and Geopolitical Observation’, published in 1925 by the geographer Iimoto Nobuyuki (1895-1989), who rebuffed the increasing white supremacism in the Pacific region. Following this, in these two final chapters of the thesis, I will explicate and analyse Japan’s application of geopolitics diachronically by setting two time frames according to the related historical events: from 1925 to the mid-1930s, and from the mid-1930s to 1945. The current chapter is devoted to the former period, during which geopolitics only enjoyed limited appreciation. However, it was the interpretation in this period that set the orientation of Japanese geopolitics for the enthusiastic support of the GEACPS later. Japan, which had been the object of geopolitical scrutiny by European geopoliticians, used the theory to analyse the country’s own situation, rather than to observe the objective state of international affairs as classical geopolitics is considered to have suggested (Ó Tuathail, 1996). The Japanese scholars, who were critical of the imperialist character of geopolitics, reversely wielded German geopolitics to analyse the contents of its own geographical community, which they thought had a different order from Europe and so attempted to rebut the contemporary Western world order.

This chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section presents a summary of data. Then, I will briefly discuss how Ratzel, Kjellén, and Haushofer analysed Japan as a geopolitical object. In the third section, I will examine geopolitics’ first application in Japan, explicating the mutation of the theory at this first stage of importation, which would develop into what I call ecological fatalism later. The fourth and final section revisits the history of the concept of the state from Ratzel to German geopolitics during the Weimar Period, relying mostly on the debate among Japanese scholars, in order to

confirm to what extent Japan's interpretation was a creation of them. A concept key to Japan's appropriation of geopolitics, instead of *Lebensraum* (living space), was *Lebensform* (form of living), which was originally introduced by Kjellén but is almost forgotten nowadays not only in Japan but also in Anglophone academia. As Japanese scholars focused on the components in their own space and on the organic development between geography and humans, they came to understand geopolitics as a theory that would endow them with knowledge to predict their own future. As they tried to understand the theory in relation to their own history as a non-Western modern nation-state, they began to conceive of the world as fundamentally inclusive, rather than exclusive. That is, contrary to their American contemporary Nicholas Spykman's claim that geography is self-evident and does not argue by itself (Ó Tuathail, 1996b:51), Japanese scholars, through a critical appraisal of geopolitical theories, construed geography as not simply 'out there', but as something that voluntarily 'predicts' by itself in the organically evolving relations between its inhabitants.

5.2. Data Summaries and Justification

A total of eighty-two works, mainly on theories of geopolitics, by forty-eight Japanese authors are analysed in this study. nine of them were published in the 1920s, twenty-two in the 1930s, and the rest in the 1940s. Acknowledging the difficulty of defining 'geopolitics' as an academic discipline (Murphy ed. 2004), I confine the selection to works that discuss theories of so-called Western classical geopolitics—mainly the original works of Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolph Kjellén, Karl Haushofer, Halford Mackinder, and Alfred Mahan (cf. Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 22-24). With a few exceptions, most of the Japanese works I study are theoretical investigations, and in practice, a large portion of the works dealt exclusively with German geopolitics instead of the Anglo-American variant. I have only been able to find one paper that introduced Mackinder (Tanaka, 1928) and a few articles referring to Bowman and Spykman (e.g. Komaki, 1934: Research Division, South Manchuria Railway Company 1942). Also, despite the large quantity of translations on his works, there was no study on Mahan's theory made by Japanese scholars during the period. This was probably because his geostrategic theory was mainly studied within the Imperial Japanese Navy given its long-standing ties with the US Navy. This absence of Anglo-American geopolitical research outside the military probably means that German geopolitics was more appropriate for Japanese scholars to justify the GEACPS as a scheme that aimed to

effect a new world order. For these empirical reasons, this study does not deal with Anglo-American geopolitics, but almost solely on the so-called German School of geopolitics.

The works under study here were published in academic journals, general magazines, newspapers, and also as books. Although the majority were written by geographers, many of them had a background in economics. The authors came from all walks of life: natural scientists, political scientists, philosophers, lawyers, journalists, bureaucrats, high school teachers, and so on. Geopolitics as a new field of study was first introduced by Fujisawa Chikao in 1925 in *Kokusai Gaikōhō Zasshi* (*Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs*). Later that year, Iimoto Nobuyuki first translated the term geopolitics as *chiseigaku* and applied the concept to his case study in a series of articles in an academic journal (1925, 1926a, 1926b). Meanwhile, Abe Ichigorō (1933) translated the term as *chiseijigaku*, which had a stronger emphasis on political science than on geography. Nonetheless, the former ended up being used until today. In 1942, the journal *Chiseigaku* was launched by the Japanese Geopolitics Association (*Chiseigaku Kyōkai*). Having the Vice Admiral Ueda Yoshitake as its president, the mission of the association was to contribute to Japan's security policymaking. The journal was sold in a relatively affordable price and widely read not only by geographers but also by military personnel (Takagi, 2009: 190), but ceased to exist in 1944. Several articles were published in popular general interest magazines. One of the magazines was *Kaizō* (*Reorganisation*), whose readership included 'the leftists' since some contributors were from the so-called worker-farmer school (*Rōnōha*) of Marxists. As some members of the Shōwa Kenkyūkai (Showa Research, Institute, Premier Konoe's brain trust) joined the writer group of *Kaizō* in the late 1930s, the magazine became the epicentre of the idea of the East Asia Cooperative Community, which would later unfold into the GEACPS. The most established writer among them was Rōyama, known for being the founder of public policy and international politics studies in Japan (Takagi, 2009).¹ Generally speaking, the writers were heavily influenced by Marxist thoughts, and a few notable writers were Marxist economic geographers, reflecting a trend in the Japanese intellectual community during the period.

¹ Rōyama will be discussed in the next chapter.

Since the aim of this thesis is not to analyse the ideological inclinations of this specific academic field,² but rather to identify wider intellectual tendencies in a human collective with qualitative analysis, those wider works of the period which I consulted were more or less related to geographical ideas. Geography had been a constantly popular topic in Japan throughout the late nineteenth to early twentieth century (Yamaguchi, 1943), with the publication of several national best-sellers, including *Fūdo* which was discussed in chapter 4. I also examine some policy papers, in order to consider the validity of my analysis in a broader context. These sources are not counted in the number given at the start of this section above. In addition to the works written by Japanese scholars, the translated works of Kjellén and Haushofer will also be referred to. Kjellén's *Die Grossmächte der Gegenwart* (*The Great Powers of Today*) was published in 1918, well before geopolitics itself was introduced to Japanese academia on a full scale. In sum, six of Kjellén's works, fifteen of Haushofer's,³ two of Ratzel's and twelve of Mahan's have been published by 1945, but it was not until 1939 that the first translation of Haushofer appeared (Nichigai Associates, 2007).⁴ However, most of the writers I analyse did consult the originals directly, judging from their references. Also, it is worth noting that the works of Karl Wittfogel, who was also critical to geopolitics, were widely appreciated, and twenty-one of his works were translated (Nichigai Associates, 2007), probably reflecting the strong influence of Marxism on interwar Japan.⁵ Because most of the Japanese works made references in the original language, the issue of translation is not taken into account in this study.

However, the notion 'analysing the Japanese appropriation of German geopolitics' should not be understood literally. 'German geopolitics' here means a series of studies from Ratzel via Kjellén to other German geopoliticians, most famously represented by Haushofer. Besides the fact that Kjellén was a Swede, as Lucien Ashworth (2014: 203-206) argues, the categorisation of 'German geopolitics' is over-simplistic. David Murphy insists that geopolitics in Germany is better understood as a wider intellectual spectrum that had 'a powerful magnetic attraction' with a 'nonpartisan utility'

² For this type of analysis of Japanese geopolitics, see Takagi (2009).

³ Some of these are different titles of the same book.

⁴ According to Spang (2000), Haushofer published some articles in Japanese newspapers from the 1920s.

⁵ Two geographers had already introduced Wittfogel's criticism before geopolitics became a fascination (Kawanishi, 1933; Satō, 1939: cf. Research Division, South Manchuria Railway Company 1942).

(Murphy, 1997: 1.1010). Following him, the conventional understanding—that geopolitics flourished because of the Nazis’ support—makes a grounded analysis of German geopolitics difficult.⁶ In fact, German geopolitics is still readily misunderstood today. Haushofer for instance is often regarded as an advocate of the kind of ‘pan-regionalism’ that took off in Japan and that divided the world into three (Yamazaki, 2013: 7-9). However, as I will demonstrate later, his original works are better understood as historical ethnographies rather than as strategic analyses (Obara, 1940: 395). As Murphy argues, German geopolitics mainly developed in ‘the fertile pluralistic political setting of Weimar Democracy’, but lost its power in Nazi Germany (Murphy, 1997: 1.62). In addition, in Japan in the 1940s, Haushofer was not the only name in geopolitics. Others, such as Otto Maul, Walther Vogel, Ewald Banse, Erich Obst, Arthur Dix, Richard Hennig, and Hermann Lautensach, were frequently referred to in the works of Japanese scholars.

This affinity with German geopolitics at large is not surprising given that, first of all, Japanese academia was most strongly under German influence since the Meiji Restoration, and for this reason German was the first academic language in several fields including geography. In addition, as mentioned by Watanabe (1942), there was a shared tendency among people to blindly admire German culture in Japan. Behind this was a sympathetic feeling for the Germans as another *Volk ohne Raum* (people without space), as markedly represented in Hans Grimm’s book title, which was a bestseller in Japan. Lastly, and most importantly perhaps, Haushofer’s geopolitics was centred on Japan and the Pacific region.

Japan’s apparently wholesale appreciation did not necessarily mean that German geopolitics provided tangible theories for Japanese scholars. In fact, the reverse was true. Iwata Kōzō, in the introduction to his book titled *Chiseigaku* (1942a), confessed that despite the numerous number of translated works on geopolitics, no single book could convince its readers what geopolitics was (see also Kunimatsu, 1944). He stated that in practice each scholar had his distinctive methodologies, rendering the definition of geopolitics rather difficult to determine. In particular, Haushofer’s works were notoriously hard to translate; translators of his works equally confessed in their prefaces how the translation was strenuous because of his esoteric writing style full of

⁶ It has been argued that the enigmatic relation between German geopolitics (particularly Haushofer) and Nazism was largely a myth (see Heske, 1987; Kost, 1989; Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 111-129; Murphy, 1997).

jargons and neologisms (Tamagusuku, 1941; Satō, 1942; Umezawa, 1943). However, it is safe to say that Haushofer's incomprehensible writing style was at the same time the source of the popularity of German geopolitics, as it was perceived as a 'mystic' (rather than scientific), and therefore 'prestigious', scholarship (Watanabe, 1942; Iwata, 1942). As Iwata (1942) had pointed out, it was in this 'inspiration' seen especially in Haushofer's 'recondite' works, that a sense of geopolitics was paradoxically found. Differently put, it is this dense aspect of geopolitics that was hailed. Therefore, German geopolitics served more as a symbolic reference, the density of which allowed Japanese scholars a creative interpretation. The vague and diffused character of German geopolitics was more a promotional factor, rather than inhibiting, for its affirmative employment in Japan.

Finally, I will briefly provide a rough overview of the history of modern Japan's geography as an academic discipline up to the first half of the last century. Drawing on Yamaguchi Sadao (1943), geography, originally developed as area studies during the Edo Period, had attracted ample attention from Japan's leaders far before the official opening-up of the country. The first map of Japan using modern surveying techniques was created by a Japanese person in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1810, the *Shōheikō*, the highest educational institution in Edo, established the Division of Topography. Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of modern Japan's founding fathers, published *Sekai Kunizukushi (The Countries in the World)* in 1869, in which he classified the globe into five regions. In the beginning of the subsequent Meiji Period when modern education system was introduced into the country, geography came to occupy one-third of the classroom time in elementary school, reflecting the Meiji leaders' strong interest in the world beyond Japan. In 1879, the Tokyo Geographical Society, modelled on the Royal Geographical Society, was founded. Geography as an academic discipline in Japan diverged from geology in the early 1890s, which was originally established by a scholar who studied at Leipzig University in Germany. Since then, geography had kept a rather 'naturalistic tendency' under the strong influence of German geography, although some scholars, like Iizuka Kōji, studied in France and were influenced by the French school of geography, and therefore critical of German geopolitics. Others, such as Uchimura Kanzō, whom I have mentioned in the last chapter, studied geography in the United States and brought back with them a 'romantic geography', which was nonetheless influenced by a teleological view of German geographers such as Carl Ritter. Although this American

route was accepted as rather outdated by the geographers trained in the German tradition, it was this view that prevailed in Japan's popular imagination, as seen in the example of Uchimura's *Chijinron* which came to be a bestseller (Yamaguchi, 1943; see also Tsujita, 1977). Another favourite book of the era on this topic was Shiga Shigetaka's *Nihonfūkeiron* (*On Japan's Landscape*) published in 1894, in which the journalist-cum-politician celebrated the beauty of Japan's diversified natural environment in implicit comparison to Europe (Shiga, 1937). In sum, it would be safe to say that geography was a popular subject of study in Japan until the end of the Second World War.

5.3. Japan as a Case of Classical Geopolitics

Japan's specificity as a destination of the travelling theory of geopolitics lies in the fact that the state had been under the intensive scrutiny of geopoliticians before Japanese scholars became interested in the theories. Although rarely mentioned today in the literature of geopolitics, Ratzel, Kjellén, and Haushofer all worked on Japan. This was indubitably because of the impressive rise of Japan transforming from an Asian feudal nation into a modern European state through the Meiji Restoration, and also because of its unique geography that resembled Great Britain. Japan's success had a twofold contradictory significance to European intellectuals: Whilst the rise of Japan was seen as a vindication of the *fin de siècle* world since it evoked the image of Europe being in a relative crisis, it simultaneously signified the validity of the European state-system. Accordingly, their assessments of Japan tended to be biased and even divided.

Ratzel

The least well-known among the three geopoliticians was Ratzel. Ironically, according to Tanaka, Ratzel had a long-lasting interest in Japan, which resulted in at least five major works on Japan, and occasionally mentioned the country in his lectures and papers between the 1870s and the first decade of the twentieth century. Tanaka argues that as was common in his era, his view was racially biased and largely underlined by Enlightenment thought, maintaining vigilance against this 'uncivilised' non-European state. In his earlier works, Ratzel, consulting research in medical studies, enumerated a few 'bizarre' physical traits of the Japanese, such as the 'dilation of stomach by overeating of rice' and 'dullness to pain', of which he was duly convinced as inferior

to European standard. Consequently, he predicted that these inferiorities could cause Japan problems in the near future. Also, he showed disgust towards the complex Asian political system which appeared to him to be a double standard, disagreeing with some of his contemporary Germans who blindly admired and idealised the country as a 'Shangri-la'. Ratzel's racial prejudice aside, his account was, as Tanaka argues, a reflection of his realist view on international relations in terms of German interests in the Asia-Pacific (Tanaka, 1996).

However, towards the end of the century, Ratzel's main interest changed from anthropology to geography. According to Tanaka, Ratzel's increasing concern in geography gradually, if not totally, eliminated his racial bias, as the shift allowed him to analyse this exotic people from a different point of view. Particularly after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Ratzel changed his opinion. Mentioning the geographical similarity between Japan and the United Kingdom, he estimated Japan's location to be possibly superior to the European empires, not only because its coastline indicated both openness and closedness, but also because the Japanese in general showed strong patriotism with a unique combination of an expansive worldview and a strong affinity to their homeland. Nevertheless, Tanaka concluded that, in the end, this grandfather of geopolitics did not abandon his faith in European superiority, for Ratzel after all attributed the strength of the Japanese to its experience of Westernisation (Tanaka, 1996).

Kjellén

In his book *Die Grossmächte der Gegenwart* (1918), Kjellén discussed in detail Japan's rise as one of the eight Great Powers. At a glance, Kjellén's appraisal of Japan was similar to Ratzel's. Calling Japan a 'new version of the United Kingdom', he asserted that it was Japan's geographical location that granted it to absorb both Western and Eastern civilisations (Kjellén, 1918). Haggman (1999) holds that Kjellén visited Japan and China in 1909, and Carl Marklund (2015) points out that Japan appeared as a role model for Sweden in his writings. However, from my point of view, Kjellén's appreciation of Japan was not so favourable, as his writing indicated a stronger interest in Japan's unusual mentality. Kjellén (1918: 324-325) argued that Japan's novelty was that the country 'changed the yellow jacket that she has worn for more than 1250 years to a white jacket'. His insistence on Japan's fortune was threefold. First, breaking away from the Chinese ideal, on which it had relied for quite

a long time, Japan employed the 'Western spirit' more for pragmatic reasons than for blind worshipping. Second, its race was the product of racial mingling between the Malayan, the Mongolian, and some others, thus giving the Japanese a dualistic trait. Third, this dualistic trait, together with Japan's realism that retained the dual ideals and policies of the West and the East despite its Westernisation, worked well in turning it into a Great Power. However, he argued, Japan's national aspiration for overseas expansion would not be accomplished, because, first, its economic performance could not be compared to the European countries, and second, its expansion in the Pacific would be blocked by the United States (Kjellén, 1918: 322-356).

Haushofer

Despite these differences, in the end it was the Pacific Ocean that was the important clue to understanding Japan's bonanza of becoming the sole non-Western Great Power. This was especially true for Haushofer, an expert in Japan. His geopolitics was based on his experience of staying in Japan between 1909 and 1910 as a Bavarian Military officer. Upon returning to Germany, he wrote his doctoral thesis on German influence on the development of Japan (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 45; Spang, 2001). During his time in Japan, Haushofer was profoundly impressed by its culture, climate, and geography, all of which he found very different from those in the Atlantic (Haushofer, 1941, 1942a, 1942b, 1943b). In his best known work *Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans* (*Geopolitics in the Pacific Ocean*), first published in 1925 and claimed to be the 'Bible of German Geopolitics' (Weigert, 1942: 738), Haushofer asserted that Japan was the sole practitioner of 'the Pacific form of living'. For him, the Pacific was a pure space that 'had not yet been tarnished by the struggle in the Atlantic' (Haushofer, 1942b: 162-165), where 'heterogeneous peoples' had been living together in peace for '2500 years' (ibid.: 6). In contrast to a centrifugal tendency in the Atlantic, it was a centripetal force that rendered the Pacific a peaceful community. However, this peace was broken when the 'white race intruded' (ibid.: 142). Hence, it was actually a 'White Peril', not the Yellow Peril, that the Pacific suffered from (ibid.: 171). For Haushofer, the Pacific was literally a gigantic space of peace that was woken up by the invasion of 'Anglo-Saxons' (ibid.: 22).

Japan was an integral part of Haushofer's geopolitics, if not for German geopolitics as a whole (Spang, 2001). Haushofer himself admitted that it was the experience and knowledge he gained in Japan that made him write a series of works on geopolitics.

This was to inform his German peers the reason Japan, who had learned most of the modern state system from Germany, was able to maintain absolute independence, whilst his homeland was not (Haushofer, 1943: 3). He even stated that his works on geopolitics were ‘confined within the monsoon region in Asia and the Pacific, which was known to him through his personal experiences’ (Haushofer et al., 1941: 26). His knowledge on Japanese history and culture was certainly extraordinary. According to Spang (2001), eleven out of his forty books in total were about Japan. In addition, Haushofer tried to develop close ties with notable Japanese political and military elites (Spang, 2006). If the claim that he was ‘the geopolitical advisor of Japan itself’ (Weigert, 1942: 738) was only some big talk about this old general who had an exhibitionistic disposition (Spang, 2006; Murphy, 1997), it was only because the vitality of Japan during the period, which fostered the country to subsequently expand its sphere of influence into the Pacific, attracted and inspired Haushofer to write the numerous works on in the country (Haushofer, 1942b; Weigert, 1942: 735). In this respect, German geopolitics already contained certain Japanese elements before it travelled (back) to Japan (Spang, 2001, 2006). The Japanese influence on Haushofer, in a similar vein to the German influence on Watsuji mentioned in the last chapter, highlights the creativity, the inward-character of knowing, and the entanglement of reception, which undermines the premise of the addresser-receptor binary in terms of power-knowledge relations.

It is safe to conclude this brief observation by claiming that, from the pragmatic analysis of Ratzel to the idealistic affirmation of Haushofer, studies by all three geopoliticians had accentuated Japan’s distinctive geography. For them, it was geography that made Japan the sole non-Western empire in the period. Despite this consensus, however, each scholar perceived a different reality in their slightly different spatio-temporal frames. In Ratzel’s works, geography allowed him to standardise his analytical frame and see Japan from a less racial point of view. For Kjellén, on the contrary, the same geography provided him with a biased standpoint that may be close to a classical geopolitician’s in our understanding today. Finally, for Haushofer, geography was the means to explain differences between peoples. Despite the divergence, all three European scholars used geographical factors to explain Japanese people’s peculiarity.

Most of the geopolitical studies above were believed to have been read by Japanese scholars. As discussed in the last section, it was a question of self-identity, rather than

the scrutiny of others, that dominated Japan's intellectual situation in the first half of the twentieth century, as the Japanese found themselves having already 'surpassed' European modernity from their point of view. This was accompanied by their pride in their geographical characteristics that had not only been protecting them from external invasion, but also allowing them to import foreign knowledge selectively from all around the world, empowering them accordingly with a sense of 'being the chosen race'. But *by whom* were they chosen, if they had no God? Moreover, as discussed in the preceding chapters, their method of thinking was subjectivist and context-dependent, which might be called a 'constructivism' in contrast to Cartesian objectivism. On the other hand, there is little doubt that the works of the European geopoliticians appealed to the ego of Japanese people. Naturally, then, Japanese scholars began their own geopolitical investigation from the consideration of their own state, rather than from analyses of international affairs and other surrounding states.

5.4. The First Application of Geopolitics in Japan

The year 1924 was a watershed for international politics in the Pacific. Before the Immigration Act of 1924, existing nationality laws in the United States had already excluded immigration from any Asian country except Japan and the Philippines. With the 1924 Immigration Act, all those born in the geographically defined 'Asiatic Barred Zone' (Office of the Historian, the U.S. Department of the State) were banned from emigrating to America. From the first decade of the last century, tension in the Pacific was increasing as Japan carried out expansionist policies in China, whilst hatred against Asians heightened in the West Coast of the United States. Because the Japanese government had complied with the Gentleman's Agreement in 1908 whereby it offered voluntary restraint of immigrants, the enactment of the Immigration Act was accepted as a violation which 'could subvert the justifiable self-esteem of the Japanese people in Japan because the ban undermined Japan's voluntary effort to abide by the agreement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1924: 11). Aydin (2007) argues that this became the decisive reason Japan and Japanese people felt that their Western and modern identity was rejected. Ōkawa Shūmei, a renowned socialist intellectual who was later prosecuted in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, had already started to argue for a 'clash of civilization thesis' during this period (Aydin, 2007: 151-153), which came to overwhelm the intellectual atmosphere in wartime Japan.

Iimoto Nobuyuki's article, published a year later in 1925, was a challenging application of geopolitics that aimed to make a rebuttal against this move made by the United States. If scholars of classical geopolitics shared a tradition of imperialism, neo-Lamarckian white supremacism, and Cartesian *cogito* rationalism (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 21-23), Iimoto's case study, which however drew on geopolitics, was in opposition to all of them. In order to reversely use geopolitics, he interrogated the substance of the organism rather than the boundary, by relying on the concept of the state as a living organism and *Lebensraum*. Through Haushofer, he claimed that geopolitics was 'a study on political *Lebensform* in a natural *Lebensraum*' (Iimoto, 1928: 91), and developed a unique variation of environmental determinism. Whilst European geographers used geography to explain the traits of a particular race, Iimoto read geopolitical theory inductively and tried to think what kind of people geography would construct, rather than looking for a causal factor of certain ethnic characteristics. This transposed mode of inquiry, which evidently contained the problem of induction in spite of the egalitarian outlook, would come to be widely shared among Japanese geopoliticians especially during the Pacific War, allowing them to claim the justice of their new world order.

Inclusive Geopolitics?

Having studied mineralogy and geography at Tokyo Imperial University (Asami, 1990), Iimoto was a central figure in Japanese geopolitics till 1945. He was dispatched to Germany by the Ministry of Education, and met Haushofer in 1936 (Okada, 2002). He deeply committed himself to the founding of the Japanese Geopolitics Association. Still, he was not a wholehearted supporter of geopolitics. Pointing out that geopolitics placed a disproportionate emphasis on foreign policy, he criticised that geopolitics could become a weapon of imperialism (Abe, 1933: 15). His fundamental concern was the 'exclusivity of others', which outweighed 'inclusivity', in modern history—a lamentable reality of human nature for Iimoto. The 'organism' in his article obviously referred not to the state, but to a group based on race (Iimoto, 1925a, 1925b, 1926). At a glance, this conflict between European geopolitics and his 'liberal' view was irredeemable.

At the outset of the article, Iimoto asserted that despite the fact that there were at least four racial categories, any racial conflict to our attention seemed to be limited within the struggles of coloured races against the white race. From his point of view,

whilst the coloured races plainly claimed social equality, the white race was opposed to it and oppressed the coloured races, reflecting the inevitable human necessity to expand his *Lebensraum* in order to sustain his life. Then he went on to claim that geopolitics was ‘the scholarship that examines the relation between political power and space’. What he was interested in was a ‘fair filling of space’ among diversified political powers (1925a: 18-22). This fairness for Iimoto could not have meant ‘the survival of the strongest’ as neo-Lamarckian geopolitics had claimed (Ó Tuathail, 1996b), since he was trying to protect the weak. In search for an inclusive geopolitics, he employed geographical determinism to address the question: What kind of people could a specific geography form? In contrast to the European understanding of geographical determinism, which used geography as a factor to explain certain traits in certain race(s), Iimoto argued that it was this European discourse that precisely constructed the ‘inferior colonial others’ through colonialism, an experience to which many Asian countries could relate. He illustrated with the rise of anti-Chinese immigrant sentiments in San Francisco, reasoning that it was due to the fact that Chinese immigrants worked more effectively than white workers—the Chinese, most of whom from the semitropical zone along the Chinese coastal line where the average temperature was much higher than in San Francisco, had a better tolerance for hot climate than white people. For Iimoto, the trait of the Chinese people was understood as nothing but a fortune endowed by their environment. However, he observed, the fortunes of the Earth were not distributed properly, and this issue should be rectified by attesting the righteousness of geopolitics.

Thus, in Iimoto’s analysis, geography came to be not just a cause but rather a dynamic determining factor which however had a volatile tendency. He argued that once the state as an organism finished filling a space by ‘laying down’ its roots in the land, it would gain mobility as the people were able to overcome geographical conditionality, which had been rapidly transformed since the previous century. This mobility, however, was not directly derived from the condition of geography, but depended on the ‘art of conquering space’ by the people. The coloured races in the Pacific had acquired this art in the course of globalisation. Therefore, the unfair occupations of space must be rectified (Iimoto, 1925a). For him, it was not the strong that determined the distribution of space. Rather, the right distribution was mutually determined through the interaction between people and their geographical condition. Despite the employment of geographical determinism and the organismic concept of

the state, Iimoto's argument did not partake of the essence of a conventional Social Darwinism, but was ostensibly much closer to the original idea of the survival of the fittest.

Conceiving the organism as mobile, divisible and even transmittable like bacteria, Iimoto emphasised the specific disposition of people nurtured in a particular geographical condition. 'The art of conquering space' was, for him, acquired as people lived in a space long enough to accustom themselves to the environment. The expansion of the state was the result of this historical mutuality between the environment and people, and not that of the struggles among organisms. This means that the winner was determined by the environment, not by battles and clashes, and that there would only be winners, not losers, as everyone could become a winner in the course of adjusting themselves to the environment. This diversified way of conceiving of relations (Qin, 2016: 12) was what made Iimoto's determinism different from conventional geopolitics. Although the elements that composed the theory were the same, the answer to 'what was determined by what or whom' became different in the end under Iimoto's line of inductive reasoning. To a certain extent, inductive reasoning was, as Hirakawa Sukehiro (2006: 31) has claimed, a typical 'reaction seen not only in Japan but in non-Western countries in general when those countries encountered the superior technologies of Western Civilisation'. What made this interpretation particularly Japanese was that power according to the interpretation served for everyone and was not someone's possession, as I have explained in chapters 2 and 3. For the Japanese, geography was powerful because it carried a discretion of power. Moreover, this discretion was decisive not because geography was static and objective, but because geographical conditions were indeterminate in nature. Iimoto believed that geography was the factor that decided who was the fittest in the Pacific at that particular point of history, and that the fittest would never be ensured an impregnable position since geography was always changing.

In his observation, examples that supported his argument were everywhere in the Pacific region. Black Americans, for instance, had acclimated themselves to the new land after numerous hardships, their quality of life improved due to their efforts (Iimoto, 1925a). Each people was characterised by their own specific features endowed by their respective geographical conditions. Therefore, space had to be properly distributed according to different people's acquired art of living. The fittest could occupy the space not because it was strong, but because they were destined to

be eligible for the occupation according to their ever-changing environmental condition and themselves.

Needless to say, for Imoto, Japan itself was the most compelling vindication of this reasoning. He asserted that Japanese immigration to the United States began with a demand from the West Coast homesteads after the labour shortage derived from the ban of Chinese immigrants in 1882; the Japanese migrated to the United States due to the increasing demand of labour power in the country, not because of their own will (Imoto, 1925b: 964). While by then the Japanese had already been expanding their sphere of living, Imoto saw it as a proof of Japanese people's vitality rather than Japan's population issue. Geography was, for him, a gift, rather than a constraint, bestowed upon Japan.

Imoto's opinion of geography as bearing an overriding influence on humans could be seen as a variance of geographical determinism bolstered by a unique optimism—Every race has its own art of living nurtured in each unique land. Hence, each people must have their proper place. Above all, people, who live in a blessed geography, could become powerful even if it is not the result of their own will, but of geography. In this respect, a particular group of people's success depends on geography, or *Erdgebundenheit* according to Imoto, which might be translated as 'spatial conditionality'.⁷ Emphasising the art of living on the one hand, and attributing the discretion of power to geography on the other, he conceptualised the result of the interactions between people and geography as 'the golden mean' (*chūyō*)⁸ (Imoto, 1928: 96-98). Indeed, the coloured races in the Pacific, including the Japanese, were the blessed effect of this interaction. Here, we can observe several differences between Imoto's geographical determinism with conventional determinism: First of all, there is no loser since all people are on the same trajectory, only that they are endowed with different goals by their respective environments; second, Imoto emphasised historicity; third, geography is the agent rather than a determinant; and therefore, fourth, each people has a proper role according to the compatibility of their environment.

Imoto claimed that the United States had closed its door despite this vitality of the coloured people authorised by their environment. Worse still, Australia, who was the

⁷ This term is from German geopolitics. See the next section.

⁸ *Zhongyong*, a concept originated from China. For a detailed discussion on this concept, see Qin (2016).

most vigorous opponent of Japan's Racial Equality Proposal at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918, was 'passively protesting' against the coloured races, 'fearing the collapse of the world for the white race'. They did not see the 'truth' of racial conflict. The Europeans, who had been fearing the Yellow Peril, had never looked back upon their White Peril. Thus, the Japanese were responsible for the solution of this in justice. Iimoto believed that Japan had 'a destiny' to rectify it for all the coloured races, and this destiny was backed by its unique geography and allowed Japan to 'know the truth' so to speak (Iimoto, 1926: 47-60). Japan represented the 'natural order', while the Western order was 'unnatural' (Satō, 2005: 110). Still, despite the superficial idealistic character, it should be noted that the inclusiveness of this belief contained a hierarchical division of labour among peoples in terms of their progress and status.

Classical, Critical, or Neoclassical?

Accusing the white race of their tyranny and arguing instead for the solidarity of races, his belief was ostensibly similar to critical geopolitics today. For Iimoto, 'the truth' was an alternative of the improper *status quo*. However, it is not only the similarity I want to stress here. The graver question is how we envisage intellectual history when it cuts across several traditions and/or regions. Following Bassin (2004: 621), Stefano Guizzini (2012: 17) terms the recent rise of geopolitics 'neoclassical geopolitics', which for Guizzini is a revival of environmental determinism 'best understood in the context of several foreign policy identity crises, a kind of "ontological security"' (ibid.: 3). At the same time, he points out that both classical and neoclassical geopolitics are not for everybody. In contemporary Germany and Sweden—indeed paradoxically in terms of the history of classical geopolitics—'geopolitical thought remained basically a dead letter' (ibid.: 16). In this respect, the Germans and the Swedes do not have 'neoclassical' but only 'classical' geopolitics, whilst many states perhaps have only 'neo'. However, is 'neoclassical' geopolitics still 'neo' without having the 'classical' bit? Indeed, in Japan, geopolitics in its most classical sense is only becoming increasingly a buzz word recently (cf. Mogi, 2015; Funahashi, 2016).⁹

⁹ The International Geopolitical Institute Japan, whose members include politicians and retired self-defense officials, was established in 2011. It is interesting to note that it is the Anglo-American geopoliticians, such as Mackinder, Mahan, and Spykman, not German ones, who are gaining popularity in contemporary Japan, with a few translations of their works (e.g. Mackinder 2008; Spykman, 2008; Asada, 2015) being continuously republished.

Differently put, in Japan it is possible to argue that ‘critical’ geopolitics emerged decades before ‘classical’ or even ‘neoclassical’ geopolitics. In contrast, critical geopolitics has confined its inquiry largely within Western contexts (Slater, 1993, 1994; Sidaway, 1997; Sharp, 2011; Atkinson and Dodds, 2000; Dodds, 2001; Hepple, 2001). To put it straightforwardly, the reason critical geopolitics has not been widely accepted could be that, for the Japanese, critical geopolitics might have been perceived not as something new, but rather as something dubious in reference to their wartime experience. If this is true, critical geopolitics is nothing but a *Western* critical geopolitics, and by extrapolation, Japanese geopolitics in the second quarter of the twentieth century was neither critical nor neoclassical in today’s sense, but could only be correctly understood in the specific spatio-temporal context in which Japan was located.

Therefore, Japan’s organismic theory of the state and geographical determinism were, following Iizuka (1935-36: 80-85), neither ‘Darwinism’ as in English, nor ‘*Darwinisme*’ as in French, nor ‘*Darwinismus*’ as in German, but *Dāwinizumu* in Japanese. They would also be developed into core components of Japanese geopolitics subsequently in the second analytical period I proposed. As I have demonstrated, this ecological fatalism was already evident in Imoto’s argument, which insisted that different peoples could develop differently, for the reality was a contingent historical integration of possibility and necessity between land and people via the mediation of environmental conditions. In such a conceptualisation, however, this difference among peoples was justifiable because it was each people’s fate (Kōyama, 1940). For this Japanese variety of determinism, the truth was a matter of consonance between people and geography, in which geography apparently had the last word. Therefore, Japanese geopolitics examined the spirituality and morality—rather than the physical strength or adaptability to the environment—of the state as an organism. For Japanese geopoliticians, it was Japan who represented this spiritual power of geography, since it was endowed by a fortunate geographical condition paralleled by no other states. As a corollary, the application of Japanese geopolitics developed in two notable directions. The first put stress on ‘subjective truth’ rather than on objective science. This truth was however governed by geography despite the subjectivity. The second direction tried to reject existing classifications such as race, ethnicity, nation, region, and culture. Instead, as the next chapter will explain, it would go on to develop its own typology.

Also to be demonstrated in the next chapter is that the state as organism was depicted in Japanese geopolitics as a continuous growth of an organic-aggregate body, in which the strong and the weak in concert performed their respective and 'proper' roles based on their place endowed by their geographical conditions. This organic-aggregate body of the state was neither a single entity nor a unit of one species (cf. Bassin, 1987), but a peaceful, transcendental agglomeration that gave each people a proper place as part of its organism. As such, this Japanese justification of state expansion had no boundaries, only a concentric and relational structure. It gave rise to the potentialities to render the world as literally one, under the leadership of the Japanese as the most progressive mixed race and hence the brain of the ever-growing organic entity beyond the nation-state. Importantly, the theory argued that the Japanese were progressive because they were the vindication of the progress as well as the evolution of human being. The Japanese only happened to occupy the leading position because of Japan's fortunate geographical condition. In this respect, the centre was fundamentally a replaceable place for them.

This worldview was radically different from the prevailing European understanding in the early twentieth century of the international arena as a jungle of competing state organisms (Bassin, 1987; Agnew, 2003). In fact, for Japanese geopoliticians, Darwinism was a mere 'illusion' (Komaki 1942: 99). In their rhetoric, the West, which tended to be more narrowly defined as Anglo-America, was strictly speaking not their enemy, because what they were fighting against was not the people, but the Anglo-American *way of thinking* that had occupied the centre of the world at that point. For the Japanese, the West would become their friend only if they could accept the alternative logic arguing that the evolving organic ideal could include possible differences. In other words, the mission of the Japanese was to let the Europeans realise the truth.

5.5. European Geopolitics as Travelling Theory

This section reviews to what extent *Dāwinizumu*, the Japanese version of Social Darwinism, was a creation of Japanese scholars. The best way to do this is to compare the writings in Japanese with the German originals. However, due to the lack of my language proficiency in German, here I mainly rely on the theoretical debate published in Japan and the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, the translated versions of the German originals, and contemporary research on classical

geopolitics. This inquiry is essential because German geopolitics, specifically the one developed in Weimar Germany, has until now rarely been squarely examined within Anglophone critical literature, with the exception of some notable works (e.g. Heske, 1987; Kost 1989; Murphy, 1997, 1999). In addition, critical geopolitics, with its emphasis on discourse, tends to deal with the representation of German geopolitics in the American political discourse, rather than looking into what it really was (Ó Tuathail, 1996b).

The centrality of the concept of the state as a living organism in classical geopolitics is best represented in this question: What is the difference between geopolitics and political geography? was probably the biggest theoretical debate among geopoliticians in Germany (Murphy, 1997) and in Japan, one which however did not produce any satisfactory answer. In Germany, even though no explicit conclusion was found regarding this debate among the circle of editors of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (Haushofer et al., 1941), a certain implicit consensus seemed to have nonetheless existed in both countries: Geopolitics was ‘dynamic’, whilst political geography was ‘static’ (Ishibashi, 1930; Abe, 1933; Haushofer et.al., 1941; Iwata, 1942; Kruszewski, 1940; see also Murphy, 1997).

Geographical determinism and the organismic concept of the state have been in the firing line in geopolitical debates. They have offered a ‘very specific appeal’ for nationalists here and there on the globe, even in this remote Asian state called Japan, because it ‘appreciated how effectively it could help the popular imagination transform a national construct into a desired vision of the nation as a natural and eternal or primordial entity’ (Bassin, 2007: 18; see also Agnew and Muscarà, 2012: 14). Following Bassin (2007), the two became more powerful when linked to national historiography. However, as Iizuka (1942-43: 206) had already pointed out in the past, the organismic concept of the state itself was a manifold conception conjuring up a variety of images. This indeterminable character of this conception and therefore the geographical determinism was what afforded a space of creation in the history of geopolitical theory. In what follows, I will briefly explain the evolution of the concept in geopolitics, discussing particularly the kind of social situation in which the three European geopoliticians developed the theory.

Ratzel

Ratzel's original conception asserted that the state, like a creature, had its own 'living space' (*Lebensraum*) that had to be incessantly expanded. Inspired by Darwinism, he conceived of the growth of the state as the domination by the strong over the weak. However, largely forgotten was that in his theorisation, the state as a living organism was '*ein aussserst unvollkommener Organismus*' (a very incomplete organism) (Obara, 1936: 279), which possibly continued to live even after it had lost a large part of its land. This somewhat immoderate theorising from our viewpoint today reflected how Ratzel tried to situate human organisation in the natural environment in order to understand something dwelling deep in people's mind. That is, he sought a rational explanation (natural law) for something ostensibly irrational and even spiritual (the state) (Iizuka, 1942-43: 211-212; Iizuka, 1935-1936). Inevitably, the concept became literal rather than metaphorical (Bassin, 1987a; Murphy, 1997: 1.326). In doing so, he contributed 'to reorganising political geography as a science that studies distribution and expansion of human' (Iizuka, 1935-1936: 94).

According to Ratzel's theory, all state-related phenomena, such as politics, economics, and even wars, have to be understood as natural (Iizuka, 1942-43: 216). The evolution is subject to biological law and is not the result of rational choice by its people. However tragic and irrational it may be, any result of these phenomena is according to universal law determined by the state's environmental conditions. The state never escapes from physical land and is always embedded in it, and is destined not only to expansion but also the ultimate death. Geographical conditions hold ascendancy over history (Yoshimura, 1933). Differently put, it is in geography that people find a 'rational' explanation to the enigmatic life of the state. Humans are seen as fundamentally passive (Iizuka, 1935-36: 76) in this 'scientific' functionalist-materialist view that analysed the state as a 'physical space' (Ezawa, 1944: 5). This theorisation is better understood as a contrast to social organism theory which opposed modern individualism (Iizuka, 1935-1936: 125; Bassin, 1987a, 1987b: 116-117). In this context, Ratzel's theory was not racial (Smith, 1980; Bassin, 1987a, 1987b; Halas, 2014); rather, it has no room for politics (Kost, 1989: 371), nor historicity (Kōyama, 1940), nor even locality (Durkheim, 1898-99 in Iizuka, 1935-36: 88-89). In Iizuka's words, Ratzel's aspiration was 'the longitudinal integration over the living world indicated by evolution theory' (Iizuka, 1947: 367; see also Watanuki, 1942).

For both German and Japanese geopoliticians who lived decades later, this Ratzelian political geography was seen as a theory that observed static conditions (Iimoto, 1926). On the other hand, Iizuka, who was critical of geopolitics, claimed that Ratzel's theory was in fact 'dynamic'. This disagreement suggests a difference in the referents induced largely by historical contextual differences: As stated above, whilst many geopoliticians' interest was in the state as society, Ratzel's object of analysis was in *land* itself, as something embracing human society and possibly the state. In this particular perspective, geographical conditions were understood as dynamic constraints to human action (Iizuka, 1944: 324), and it was this misunderstanding that slightly but fundamentally diverged Kjellén's conceptualisation of state as a living organism from Ratzel's.

Kjellén

Bassin (1987b: 117) has identified another aspect of Ratzel's determinism: Under the influence of Carl Ritter, Ratzel saw 'physical environment as a molding influence on the character and development of human society'. Kjellén's organismic theory, borrowing mostly this aspect but not the 'purely biological' idea from Ratzel, belonged to the tradition of social organism theory, whose concern was on society. This was because Kjellén's theory was, as he himself had put it, for the purpose of answering the 'lack of our science' (Kjellén, 1936: 21; see also Iizuka, 1942-43: 187), in complete contrast to Ratzel's aspiration of geography *as* a science. As a politician, Kjellén looked for a proper explanation for the everyday reality of (European) international relations he and his contemporaries were facing. At the outset of *Der Staat als Lebensform* (1917), the work that earned him most popularity in Japan during this period, he defined the aim of the book as revealing the substance of the state empirically. In other words, his object of study was the state as a *power holder* as clearly seen in the title, rather than the state as a geographical entity.

For Kjellén, the state was metaphorised as a person with a 'Janus-like', 'two-sided' face. Whilst its domestic legal and institutional aspects had been well examined, its international aspect as a historic and social entity constructed through interactions among nations had not. Accordingly, he asserted, existing approaches in the coeval *Staatslehre* (political science) had left the state 'in the air' without discussing its relation to geography. Whilst those approaches could explain how the state functioned domestically, they were of little use in explaining international relations, a growing

concern of his era. He illustrated with news article titles such as ‘voracious Russia’, ‘vengeful France’, ‘Paris is talking with Berlin, while London is listening’, and so on, talking about states as if they were persons—an aspect of the state which he termed *mächte* (power) (Kjellén, 1936: 3-17; Haggman, 1998), which is the state as *Lebensform*. The expansion of *Lebensraum* depended on the quality of this *Lebensform*, i.e. the quality of the state as ‘*überindividuelle Lebewesen*’ (super-individual being) (Kjellén, 1936: 31; Mattusch, 1942; Kruszewski, 1940).

As Fujisawa (1925) had praised, the ‘novelty’ of Kjellén’s theory was that it explained ‘our everyday and practical experience’ of the state as a phenomenon. In Kjellén’s own words, through geopolitics he wanted to consider the ‘spiritual depth’ of ‘the enigma of the state’—which for him was far deeper than ‘geographical science’ could reach (Kjellén, 1936: 20-21; Ogawa, 1928). That is, he relied on Ratzel’s concept to address the same question as he did though in a very different way. Ratzel, who was twenty years older than Kjellén, believed that evolution made people realise all things (including humans) are part of nature. By contrast, for Kjellén, it was difference among humans that differentiated the Great Powers from other states. Consequently, environmental determinism in Kjellén’s work became very close to what we understand today, asserting the survival of the strongest instead of the fittest (cf. Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 22-23). It was claimed to be a dynamic theory because it emphasised the will of the state as a *Lebensform*, whose power was assumed to be designated by the state’s geographical condition. Kjellén regarded the state as an ‘organic individual’ with an ‘autotelic personality’ (Kjellén, 1936: 32), but in such a theorisation geography was treated as static in contrast to Ratzel’s theory. Therefore, despite the emphasis on geography, the state seemed to be paradoxically detached from the environment.

Haushofer

To a certain extent, the state as living organism was marginalised in Haushofer’s geopolitics, even though the concept was claimed to be a component of the theory. According to Murphy (1997: 1.2599), many German geopoliticians actually tried to seek ways to escape geodeterminism. The reason for this inconsistent marginalisation can be discerned when we consider Haushofer’s aim of studying geopolitics. Flourished in the Weimar Period, German geopolitics was faced with the task of addressing the issue about the land Germany had lost in the First World War. In order

to avoid further tragedies, and hopefully to take back the land, the livelihood of the Germans had to be reestablished on a concrete foundation. However, the territory lost was no longer part of the state, and it was difficult to depict it as an integrated personality like Kjellén had posited. Instead, Haushofer insisted that geopolitics was the study on ‘*Lebensform* in a natural *Lebensraum*’ (Haushofer et al., 1941), which rendered his study fundamentally ethnographic rather than strategic. Accordingly, the state as organism came to be envisaged as a group of humans, or *Volk*, rather than a single person. Bluntly put, borders had to be dynamic in German geopolitics.

Living in a state that had lost the First World War, Haushofer’s ambition was to predict a better future for his peers and compatriots. This was well reflected in *Bausteine zur Geopolitik (Principles of Geopolitics, 1928)*, which he co-wrote with other editors of *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*. As Obara Keishi (1936: 302-303) summarised concisely, the work had three main focuses: the state as an organism; geographical determinism in relation to *Erdgebundenheit*; and the practical role of geopolitics as a guideline in leading political actions. In Obara’s interpretation, there was no logical connection between the first and second focuses (i.e. between the organismic concept of the state and geographical determinism), for they existed only to justify the third principle. This discrepancy as well as ambition was evidenced in this claim of Haushofer: ‘There rarely exists an objective fact in geopolitics’ (Haushofer, 1943: 543). This was obviously in contradiction with conventional geographical determinism. In addition, he asserted that geopolitics was about *techné* (art) (Haushofer et al., 1941: 61). Whilst setting up the hurdles by emphasising geographical conditionality, he on the other hand asserted that the conditionality was surmountable by arguing for subjectivity. Haushofer wanted this dubious argument to become a fulfilled prophecy, since the wish of the Germans during the period was the change of territorial borders (Murphy, 1997). He also claimed that he wanted to educate the people, particularly the workers rather than the state elites (Haushofer et al. 1941: 70-71).

His prediction for a better future would be reliable only when it could ratify the existence of a special bond between a specific land and a people somewhere else on this planet. Here, it should be noted that for Haushofer, Germany was by his time no longer a great power. In his own assertion geopolitics was a comprehensive science ‘to retain the state in its space that has already existed from long ago for visionary *Völker*’, a point that explained why he limited the field of his geopolitical investigation

to the region of ‘monsoon Asia and space of pacific’ (Haushofer et al., 1941: 26). It could never happen to the ‘best democracy’, stated he, that ‘only a few rich people in the imperial great powers’ could suppress ‘peoples in monsoon region’, the ‘Germans’, and ‘Near Eastern people’ (Haushofer et al., 1941: 73). On the contrary, Haushofer found in the Pacific the ideal bond between people and land, which could attest to the righteousness of his prediction. The Japanese was the visionary *Völker*. As briefly introduced in the last section, the Pacific was for Haushofer a space where people enjoyed a long-lasting peace in contrast to the Atlantic, and Japan, which was still independent at that point and was about to drive the Anglo-Saxons out of the Pacific, was the sole practitioner of the *techne* and utilized the geographical conditionality (Haushofer, 1943b). In this respect, Haushofer’s *Volk* is not an elusive concept, as has been assumed since he found his evidence in the coloured race of the Japanese, but an adjustable one (Obara 1936: 301).

Therefore, it is too facile to argue that geopolitics was an abuse of science by those who were not satisfied with the Treaty of Versailles (Iizuka, 1942-1943: 197-202; Bowman, 1942: 648). On the contrary, geopolitics, at least in Germany in the early twentieth century, came to be a theory that allowed its practitioners to bypass a scientific investigation, since it placed a blind faith on human will, which did not necessarily mean rationality, but could mean spirituality sometimes. For Haushofer’s geopolitics, what was important was the organic bond between land and people, rather than organism. Emphasising this bond, he saw geography as a subjective and unique projection whereby a people cultivated their own future by deliberately selecting environmental factors in accordance with their needs and wants. Geopolitics was in this way acknowledged to be an applied science that made his prediction possible so as to encourage the Germans to believe in a better future.

In this respect, Haushofer’s geopolitics was a bold ‘challenge to the objectivity of truth’ (Iizuka, 1946: 424). Or it was, ‘political metaphysics’ (Morgenthau, 1993: 179), or ‘pseudo-philosophy’ (Neumann, 1943: 285; see also Hagan, 1942). In our context today which sees the rise of post-positivism and the increasing questioning of the feasibility of plurality, it may even be considered by some that Haushofer’s subjectivism, together with Kjellén’s personified state, contains an implication for cosmopolitan and multi-national aspiration (Tunander, 2005). Haushofer’s subjective and ‘aesthetic’ turn could be attributed to a few reasons. First, in 1920s Germany, science was no longer something that could free humans from any enigma of life as it

had been for Ratzel. Murphy (1997: 1.1233) points out that the turn of German geopolitics was not a reflection of its 'nonrationalism', but a 'deliberate effort to incorporate the irrational in geopolitical thinking about the relationship between geography, humankind, and politics'. In doing so, it was asserted, human had to overcome science. Germany's traumatic experiences 'encouraged German academic geographers to turn away from earlier interests in physical and mathematical geography' and 'instead to cultivate more subjective branches of their field' (see also Bassin, 1987b). Thus while science could be regarded as the magic word in early twentieth-century America, the same could not be said for Germany in the same period.

In the end, the power of geopolitics was not in its novelty but in its revisionist tendency, and Haushofer's subjective turn was no exception. Kost (1989: 369; see also Smith, 1990) argues that German geopolitics in the twentieth century 'only reinforce[d] patterns of thinking which have been a component of the German geography since the end of the 19th century'. Indeed, German geopolitics was nothing but uniquely German geopolitics. This may contradict Murphy's point, but it means that the superficial novelty was accepted because it contained familiarity, and it is also appropriate at this point to be reminded of Japan's influence on Haushofer (Spang, 2000, 2007).

At the same time, German geopolitics was a product of Germany's bitter rivalry with the United States. According to Iizuka (1946: 424), Haushofer's claim to subjective truth should be better understood in the context of German aversion against Anglo-Saxon universalism, rather than as a mere political propaganda to unite their homeland. To be sure, for the Americans, Haushofer's geopolitics appeared to have foreseen 'the coming doom of the white race with fatalism and even with malicious joy', as Hans Weigert (1942) put it. Haushofer's discourse identified no 'instinct of the unity of white race' (Weigert, 1942: 735), which might strike the Americans as a curtain-raiser to the end of not only colonialism but also white supremacism.¹⁰ Theodore Roosevelt famously foretold that the start of the twentieth century was the period when a dawn of the Age of Pacific was anticipated. The Pacific Ocean was a

¹⁰ Dower (1986: 1.3503-3512) points out that American leaders during WWII believed that the Japanese and the Germans were trying to mobilise black Americans to demand for racial equality. Indeed, in the 1930s, the Japanese did attempt to influence the opinions of the black population in the US.

gigantic space waiting to be filled, heralding a new age of international politics. It was in this context that German geopolitics had a mythic effect in the United States.

Thus, as Werner Cahnman (1943: 56) had pointed out earlier, ‘no rigid geographical determinism is applied in geopolitics’. Geopolitics had ‘no singular form’ (Weigert, 1942: 733). Moreover, as seen in Haushofer, the emphasis was not always on the state and its materiality (cf. Dittmer, 2014). In short, geopolitics did not exist solely for the state. Classical geopolitics is readily equated with geographical determinism of the state in geopolitical debates today. It is geographical determinism, posited as the logical corollary of the concept of the state as living organism, that is considered to exercise the discursive power of the state. However, my arguments above also show that the way the two concepts are related was actually diverse. Thus, geographical determinism as a discourse is the product of indeterminate process(es), a large part of which are however neglected and therefore generate unsynthesisable cognitive voids that go on to facilitate other misunderstandings.

Returning to the first application in Japan, Iimoto’s assertion for a fair distribution of space in the Pacific was certainly an employment of Haushofer’s theory. However, the difference between the two is that in Iimoto’s discussion, the concept of the state as a living organism returned to the centre of discussion, emphasising the fatalistic element and even going beyond subjectivism. This point will be further clarified in the next chapter. With this chapter, what I want to draw attention to is this point: theory is always travelling, and a pair of seemingly analogous conceptions can in fact be significantly different. No two versions of geopolitics are the same, and the state can be conceived differently in each geographical community. Eventually, then, as the next chapter will demonstrate, Japanese geopolitics developed a very different projection of the state as a living organism, despite its supposed wholesale appropriation of Haushofer’s theory.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter studied the first period of Japan’s importation of geopolitics between 1925 and 1936. This first application was in order to counter the racism that became increasingly hostile in the Pacific region. Iimoto, interested in the different ordering of space in the Pacific from the Atlantic, and relying on German geopolitics especially Haushofer’s work, argued for the fair reordering, rather than distribution, of global space. In Iimoto’s writing and inductive application of geopolitical theory, it was

geography that speaks truth, not the objective reality humans perceived in their environment. In his argument, Japan was the embodiment of the natural law that governed the Pacific. Despite the employment of German geopolitics, his argument was distinctively Japanese, underpinned by the site-specific practices nurtured in the community of experience to which he belonged. This can be clearly seen in his latent attribution of power, and assignment of agency, to geography. For him, geography is deterministic because it endows people with power. Two traits of Japanese geopolitics have been identified in this chapter. First, in Japan, it was *Lebensform*, rather than the well-known concept of *Lebensraum*, that inspired their geopolitical imagination. Second, this emphasis on content, rather than on boundaries, led Japanese people to believe in the righteousness of their expansionist policy, which was conceived as a regional and possibly global integration that would eventually dissolve the state system. Thus, in Japan, geopolitics was interpreted in a unique ecological fatalism with an idealistic character. As Iimoto (1928: 92) claimed, in Japan, ‘the task of geopolitics’ was ‘to acknowledge the political ideal embodied by the existence of the state’.

Another important claim of this chapter is that theory is in fact always travelling both temporally and spatially, even within Europe. The geopolitical theory of the state as a living organism was transformed as it travelled from Ratzel in Germany to Kjellén in Sweden and then back to Haushofer in Germany. In the process, Ratzel’s determinism was significantly altered according to each context, and through this process, the concept of the state as a living organism became ‘a thick signifier’ (Huysmans, 1998: 228) in which various meanings were articulated in accordance with each site-specific understanding of power relations. However, it was difficult to detect such substantial mutation, because the concept was claimed to be applied affirmative in each site. This ostensibly invisible transformation of the concept is better understood as ‘an adjustment of the way of looking at a problem’ (Maruyama, 1978: 332-33) therefore tends to be forgotten later.

Certainly, the transformation of geopolitics was a continuous myth-making process ‘or imaginative economy around geopolitics-as-object (a concept, but also a focus of desire)’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 114). However, this mythologisation of geopolitics was complicated, despite the simplicity of the myth on the surface. This complexity was the fruit of a chain of misunderstandings, wilful creations, and convenient oblivions of several groups of peoples in different spatio-temporal situations. The

miscomprehensions remained unaware among the practitioners of geopolitics, and they even facilitated further misunderstandings, but these are no excuses to continue ignoring the complexity of such myth.

6 Japanese Geopolitics

Thus the unorthodox theories of the past become the commonly accepted ideas of the present; yesterday's eccentric notions become today's common knowledge. Therefore the unorthodox views of today will most certainly become the common ideas and theories of the future.

—Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (2009: 15)¹¹

6.1. Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how the Japanese developed their own geopolitics from the mid-1930s to 1945, the second analytical period I have devised for this thesis. This geopolitics came to be called *Daitōa Chiseigaku* (Greater East Asia geopolitics), taking a pivotal role in the academic debate on the Great East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere (GEACPS) at the time. In this second period, geopolitics offered Japan a subjectivity to face off against the Western world order. Japanese geopolitics argued that the *region* (rather than the state) as a living organism—a peaceful polity originating from the peaceful history in Asia—was awakened by the intrusion of the white race. It was believed that a new regionalism emerging in the Pacific was destined to supplant the European modern state system to attain a more peaceful world order. By doing so, Japanese geopolitics developed an ecological fatalism instead of environmental determinism. This ecological fatalism asserted that Japan, because it was endowed with a rare felicitous combination of geography and people, had a mission to change the Eurocentric world order.

Daitōa Chiseigaku, which analysed almost solely Japan and its surrounding region by inductively applying geopolitical theories, was fundamentally supported by popular imagination, as it evocatively argued for people's form of living (*Lebensform*) in a specific geographical space. The present thesis does not aim to provide evidence that the government of the Japanese Empire abused geopolitics. Instead, it supports the recent argument about the performative nature of imaginative geographies in security discourse (Bialasiewicz et al., 2007), and shows that the efficacy of

¹¹ This is taken from an English translation. The original was published in 1875.

geopolitics was that it helped a certain type of policies make sense, rather than help creating them. The idea of the GEACPS attracted a broad support from the political left and the right, contributing to ‘a remarkable consensus after a long political confusion’ which eventually led Japan to the Second World War (Takeyama, 1985: 131; see also Samuels, 2007). The evanescent assemblage, in which Japan saw the Japanese political subjectivity as independent from Western domination, emerged out of numerous contact points between multiple elements to make sense of knowledge in the local context, automatically identifying the law that the people followed. Although the knowledge looked novel, it actually contained familiarity, and moreover was inflected in the process of knowing. An important part of the inflection rested on the subconscious, creating an unsynthesisable realm between the original and the interpretation. Despite this subtlety, the conversion of knowledge became salient when it was turned into a geopolitical imagination, as this chapter will demonstrate. In this way, geopolitics, which was of European origin, paradoxically fostered the transformation of modern Japan’s identity in world politics, from one that saw itself as part of the West to one as part of the East, eventually enabling Japan to fight against the ideal of the West.

This development will be attested by three approaches. First, I will introduce the example of *tenkō* (ideological reversal, conversion)¹² of a scholar from European political theories to Japanese geopolitics, so as to explicate how a hidden standpoint of the knowledge recipient, the internal structure of one person’s thought however embedded in a community, contributed to the devotion of geopolitics. For this discussion, I will introduce the work of Rōyama Masamichi (1895-1980). He established the Shōwa Kenkyūkai in 1933, which was an influential political think tank for Premier Konoe and proposed the idea of the East Asia Cooperative Community (which would be developed into the GEACPS later). Rōyama was elected into the House of Representatives in 1942, and purged from public service in 1948.¹³ My choice of using Rōyama is justifiable not just by his prestigious political position but also his fame as a liberal socialist who had consistently pursued the ideal of

¹² *Tenkō* is a Japanese term originally indicating the ideological reversal of socialists. Many of them became a nationalist who supported the Emperor system. It first came into use when the socialists renounced their political belief under the implementation of the Public Security Preservation Law in 1925. However, the term has been widely used in the post-war period. See for example *Tenkō: Kyōdōkenkyū* (Shisō no Kagaku Kenkyūkai, 1960).

¹³ However, the purge was lifted in the following year.

democratic coexistence both domestically and internationally throughout his academic career (Matsuzawa, 1962). It is this liberal profile of his that suggested a typical tendency among academics who were devoted to *Daitōa Chiseigaku*. Rōyama's idea of geopolitical regionalism was an idealistic cosmopolitan alternative to European power politics. In his employment of geopolitics, he was guided by intuition and emotion as a Japanese person, rather than by erudite and external reasons to defend Japan's national interests.

Second, I will discuss a Japanese geopolitician's theorisation on especially space and taxonomy, in an effort to understand how a different epistemic tradition mutates theory. For this, I rely on Ezawa Jōji (1907-1975). His works are the most sophisticated example in which a common understanding of the role of space in knowledge production, vaguely identified among the Japanese intellectuals of his time, was well elaborated as a theory, resonating with Nishida's theory of *basho*. In studying his work, I will delineate how tacit knowledge in a community of experience worked behind the ostensibly reasonable theorisations. Finally, I will explicate the new world order envisaged by Japanese geopolitics, which was borderless but paradoxically had a rigid hierarchy whose building blocks were different peoples. Here, I draw on as many scholarly works as possible in an effort to show how broadly the analogous way of thinking, particularly power relations, was identical amongst Japanese intellectuals. In addition, some reflections outside the academic circle will be examined. For this, I rely on a series of policy papers and some popular writings of the period. The policy papers were written by the Population and *Minzoku*¹⁴ Division of the Health and Welfare Ministry Research Institute in 1943. They are probably the most detailed existing official documents on this subject, in which the population and ethnic policies in the GEACPS were fully elaborated. In examining these sources, this chapter demonstrates how the one-world strategy modern Japan presented by supposedly relying on European geopolitical theory was in fact supported by a performative self-image of the state in popular consciousness, in which even academic circles were embedded.

¹⁴ The concept of *minzoku* will be explained later.

6.2. An Idealist Geopolitics?

The 1930s saw the escalations towards the Pacific War. Two years after the Manchurian Incident in 1931, which led to the establishment of Manchukuo by the Japanese government, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations. In 1937, a series of battles started with the Lugouqiao (Marco Polo Bridge) Incident. In December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour in Hawaii and finally declared the Greater East Asia War. In this path towards the war, the Japanese government made a curious policy change. This series of battles and military clashes were informally called ‘the War against Great Britain, America, and Dutch’. However, the moniker was changed when the war was officially launched, an attempt to clarify, it was said, the aim of the war. The new nomenclature was controversial within the Imperial Government itself, with two major camps on the war objectives. Whilst some insisted that the war was for ‘self-sufficiency and self-defence’ (*jison jiei*), others saw the establishment of the GEACPS as the ultimate aim (Shōji, 2011). A common ground was sought in that the GEACPS was for *jison jiei* and not for colonisation. In the meantime, the new name also evidently blurred who the enemy was. Nevertheless, as a curious mosaic of moralistic reason and practical demand, and saliency and opacity, hitched to the fore, the geographical designation *Daitōa* in the war’s new nomenclature provided a nodal point of interpretation of European geopolitics. It was in this assemblage that scholars found a usefulness of geopolitics, which had been disregarded for a decade since it was first imported. Rōyama was the first to excavate geopolitics to explain the equivocal regionalism after a decade since Imoto’s first application.

The ‘Awakening’ of the East

Rōyama is still one of the biggest names in the history of Japan’s political science, while his assertive commitment to geopolitics during wartime is less known or largely forgotten today. This is not only because Rōyama himself was silent about it after the war, but also because geopolitics *per se* had been literally abandoned after Japan’s defeat. His own work on the history of Japanese political science published in 1950 had no reference about geopolitics at all (Royama, 1968). He was more an Anglophile than a Germanophile, since he had studied in the United Kingdom for two years from 1924. The later generations regard his detour to German geopolitics as a compelling ‘choice of the lesser evil’ (Maruyama, 1980) and a limited application (Hatanao, 1981) under the wartime structure. By contrast, following Matsuzawa Hiroaki (1962), I

argue that his application was rather comprehensive, and the shift to German geopolitics was primarily induced by a way of thinking that was shared in Japan as a community of experience.

Rōyama's commitment to German geopolitics began soon after his visit to the United States accompanying Premier Konoe in 1934, a year after Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations. In a paper titled 'The U.S.-Japan Relations and its Crisis' written in 1935, he stated that he was baffled during the visit that the American specialists on Japan assessed its diplomatic issues as being inherent in 'the universalising process of modernisation or Westernisation'. In other words, Japan's alleged aggression was understood by the Americans as a symptom of a specific stage in the universal progress of the state, whose standard was 'Western Civilisation' (Rōyama, 1935a: 116). Or in short, the Americans believed that Japan's aggression arose because the country was still on a learning curve. In this way, Rōyama (ibid.: 117) asserted, the Americans saw 'international cooperation' 'based on evolution theory'. On the contrary, for him, the diplomatic crisis was attributable to Japan's 'revolutionary situation' as a result of its actions in the past few years. Japan had found that its history diverged from the Western trajectory of modernity. He argued that these actions changed even the perspective of the Japanese leaders who had been taking the stance of cooperative diplomacy with Anglo-America following the universal claim of the West (1935a: 1935b).

The idea of *kyōchō gaikō* (cooperative diplomacy), which Japan carried out in the interwar period, was a 'pacifist' foreign policy in harmony with the West led by Shidehara Kijūrō. According to Rōyama, however, this policy was sustainable if and only if two premises were first proven right: first, that China, which was at the time confused with itself, would evolve to be a 'perfect modern state'; and second, that Japan's harsh economic situation would be stabilised as its capitalism developed further (Rōyama, 1935a: 118-119). Differently put, for him, *kyōchō gaikō* was possible only when the premises became evidence to the universal development of the modern nation-state. From his point of view, however, both premises were failing. The Manchurian incident (1931), in particular, suggested that the relation between Japan and Manchukuo was not that of a colonial economy, but of a 'regional cooperative economy' (Rōyama, 1938: 15), which indicated that Japan had a unique form of civilisation that was completely different from the West. For Rōyama, this realisation was never meant to be an imperial expansion, and was therefore in total opposition to

America's Manifest Destiny, which had expanded into the Pacific and China by that time (Rōyama, 1935b: 131, 1938). Despite this fact, Rōyama argued that American intellectuals had difficulty in admitting that Japan's unique development was rooted in the unique Eastern civilisation that had different standards. The Americans, believing in the 'universality of material conditions' and showing a tendency of 'self-centredness' in their historical consciousness, merely viewed Japan's actions in the Pacific region as part of its imperial expansion (Rōyama, 1935b: 127).

For Rōyama, geopolitics was a revelation for this awakening of *Tōyō*, because he saw a profound potential in geopolitics to explain the ongoing and remarkable phenomenon that indicated the historical divergence between the East and the West. Following Okakura's declaration of 'Asia is one' (see chapter 4), this awakening was for Rōyama a true arousal of Japan after a long slumber since the opening of the country. In a 1938 paper, he proposed the establishment of the East Asia Cooperative Community by vigorously asserting that Japan's war with China was a 'holy war' not for its territorial ambition, but for the moralistic purpose of attaining perpetual peace by integrating *Tōyō* in the name of Asia's justice. Japan, 'being independent for the first time from the intervention of Western countries', had acknowledged its mission from its own standpoint. Therefore, Japan's war was 'a phenomenon of the global historical significance', which had to be strictly distinguished from the regionally limited wars in modern Europe (Rōyama, 1938). Furthermore, this awareness carried a hint of Rōyama's own academic enlightenment: He blamed himself for not having studied the 'forming principles of Japanese politics' until then. The consequential events following the Manchurian Incident were an alarm that led him to the acknowledgement of the 'reality of politics' (Rōyama, 1941: 55).

Inversions? Organism beyond the State

In Rōyama's geopolitics, and in *Daitōa Chiseigaku* more broadly, there are certain tangible inversions from the original theory, not unlike Iimoto's case. Whilst classical geopolitics is considered realist, arguing for the objective truth of the state to survive (Ó Tuathail, 1996b; Guzzini, 2012), *Daitōa Chiseigaku* argued for the survival of the region, not the state, and for subjective truth. It was an intellectual weapon for the Japanese geopoliticians to assert the plurality of local knowledge to counter the West's abuse of geographical knowledge for the survival of the state. In this assertion, Japan

was described as the leader of the people suppressed by European knowledge. Simply put, it was an unmitigated idealism.

Rōyama's philosophy was a functionalism of sorts, postulating that social bonds were an intrinsic ideal to be attained by individual human beings (Matsuzawa, 1962: 259). The ideal functioned as a social bond because it was considered to be a shared value in society. As Sakai Tetsuya (2007: 122) maintains, Rōyama's intellectual trajectory started from an exploration of the dissolution of the state posited as given in the German *Staatslehre*, which had dominated Japanese academia in Rōyama's time (Rōyama, 1949; Sakai, 2007). According to Sakai, this was a trend broadly seen among Japanese scholars who aspired to establish political science as a discipline independent from legal studies (cf. Fujisawa, 1925). Influenced by British idealism, Rōyama conceived of politics as an expansion of the internal order, which was for him primarily the inner self of an individual (Sakai, 2007). Therefore, the twentieth century had to mark the end of the nation-state, the establishment of the League of Nations was a perfect vindication of this theory, even if Japan's withdrawal from the League would question this hypothesis.

In addition, there was another problem with his theory. At first glance, Rōyama's conception of the world resembles that of the English School of IR. However, his understanding of physical space revealed a grave contradiction to the English School's spatial conception. Objectively speaking, Japan's entry into international society was undeniably an inclusion into the Western international society and never *vice versa*. So long as world history was comprehended in such a way that Japan was 'forced open' by the West, Japan's expansion could never be comprehended as the expansion of the internal principle, but only as a domination of the external principle, in perfect opposition to Rōyama's hypothesis, which would become plausible only when Japan's modern history was recognised in another way. This trouble was caused by Rōyama's position in between what Iizuka called two 'second worlds', namely the world of Europe and that of Japan (Iizuka 1935-1936; see chapter 3). Theoretically, he was in the European world, whilst physically and empirically he was in Japan. To be sure, applying a theory of Western origin to another spatial context is a common practice in the non-Western world even today. However, when it is a theory concerning social systems, its irredeemable spatiality could cause issues.

The Manchurian Incident in China was a timely happening that inspired a breakthrough in his theory. The incident was, in retrospect, full of conspiracies by the

Imperial Japanese Army. Yet for Rōyama, who probably did not know the facts at that time, it was an apocalypse that indicated that Japan was in fact spatially different from the West. The consecutive events after the incident could not be explained by Western experiences. Viewed from a different angle, the Incident could attest to his theory, only if the space of the theory was replaced from Europe to Japan through a reinterpretation of history. For him, it was a natural consequence that the Japanese eventually reached the end of its following of the Western trajectory of modernity after having abandoned Asia for nearly a century (Rōyama, 1939d: 196-197).

Indeed, emphasising the shared value of inner selves, Rōyama's conception of the individual diverged from the conception derived since the Enlightenment. As explained above, however, Rōyama's ideal of the internal self was posited as 'a common ideal' in the society to which one belonged (Matsuzawa, 1962: 259). Society and individuals mutually developed and therefore individual's 'will, affection, and passion' were embedded in the society (Rōyama, 1939e: 172-173; Matsuzawa, 1962: 259). International politics was an ongoing reality, whilst its conceptualisation was only embryonic in the thought of a limited number of intellectuals. Therefore, Rōyama stated, it was the task of students of political science to develop concepts to promote the correct understanding of international politics to the public (Matsuzawa, 1962: 253). Led by an awareness of being a Japanese person in Asia but having been inspired by European theories, he conceptualised international politics as an incessant, expansive progress of society from the local community to the state, and ultimately to the whole world. Crucially, as Matsuzawa claims, envisaging the emergence of society as fundamentally spontaneous, this idea accompanied the disavowal of intellectualism. Rōyama saw the possibility of a new world order in which each people would live together based on common emotions. For this order, the state and even European-style nationalism were the mother of all evil (Matsuzawa, 1962: 251-254), since they were rationalised as thought by European capitalism (Rōyama, 1938: 12-13). The real order had to be established on a deeper common ground between Asians. The theory for regionalism had to be based on an 'aesthetic intuition', generated out of 'people and earth' (Rōyama, 1938: 19).

Thus, for Rōyama, who had found Japan's uniqueness in world politics, geopolitics offered both theoretical and empirical usefulness. Theoretically, it helped him re-conceptualise international politics as an expansion of their own internal principle. Empirically, geopolitics supported Japan's 'true' identity that he had found, liberating

it from the straitjacket of Western modernity. Geopolitics informed him what Japan really was, in contrast to the universality of human progress suggested by those Western-originated democratic theories familiar to him. Therefore, for Rōyama, geopolitics was a saviour, for it gave a concrete meaning to his country's growing isolation from Western international society, while simultaneously lending support to his own prognosis of world politics.

Rōyama's employment of geopolitics and its inversions were apparently induced by Japan's physical conditions. As Hatano Sumio (1981) insists, Rōyama, a liberalist deeply committed to Konoe's policy-making, needed a logic to differentiate Japan's reasoning to fight the war from the West's reasoning to gain support of Asian nations. However, the discussion above shows another aspect of his *tenkō*: Rōyama came to be interested in geopolitics, as Hatano states (Hatano, 1981: 36), exactly because of the subjective nature of geopolitics, which offered him a way to rewrite Japanese history based on their *own history*. In doing so, his 'second worlds' (Iizuka, 1935-1936) would become Japanese, filling the gap between theory and practice. He interpreted the aim of Haushofer's geopolitics as understanding historical events as geographical phenomena in relation to the content of the 'natural living space' of the state. He argued that 'this particular science cannot reject the existence of subjective aspects in the movement of history' (Rōyama, 1939c: 99), as understanding history essentially required a subjective appraisal. Through this subjective appraisal, Universal History would be successfully reinterpreted to support his theory. Whilst science was based on objectivity, geopolitics would exceed it by giving explanations to the 'subjective romantic mystique' of statecraft, which was the uniqueness of Japan (*ibid.*: 100). It was this subjectivity, historicity, and expediency of geopolitics that allowed him to insist that 'it is only in geopolitics that the GEACPS can be dealt with as an object of research' (Rōyama, *ibid.*: 102).

Rōyama further claimed that '[g]eopolitically', modern Japan had until that point belonged to a 'significantly alien category to where the ordinary interpretation of history indicated', or in other words the West. This 'ordinary history' was based on the concept of the Westphalian state that had dominated Japanese academia. However, he insisted, what had been totally forgotten was 'the location of the national land of Japan'. For him, the difference lies 'in the location and not in a matter of good or bad' (Rōyama, 1939c: 104-105). Thus, he relied on geopolitics because he thought it was crucial for his own conceptualisation of the idealistic society, rather than for a torturing

justification of Japan's imperialism. Above all, his own sentiments as a member of society, rather than that as a scholar, urged him to argue for the uniqueness of Japan. It was this shift from the passive acceptance of foreign knowledge to the surge of an intrinsic creativity, that German geopolitics, especially Haushofer's (1942a, 1942b), encouraged the Japanese to do as German geopolitics argued for the plurality of world order. Hence, it was Rōyama's own internal construction, if not the intrinsic elements of him, that echoed this proposition of German geopolitics.

As already discussed in chapter 5, all the European geopoliticians interested in Japan had pointed out Japan's geographical peculiarity. Yet, geographical terms such as the Far East and Asia were given by the West and demonstrate the passivity of the East. Nevertheless, Japan was assertive in its expansion into the continent, and nationalism was on prominent rise at that point. Rōyama saw these developments as the vindication of shared values in Asia in opposition to Western dominance, and as a support to his inside-outside hypothesis of the expansion of international society for non-Western states. He called this 'the awakening of Asia': Asians would finally recall that they had their own traditional world order. The real obstacle for Rōyama was that the Chinese, who allowed the West to fight against their own nationalism, had not yet truly awakened as Asians. Hence, Japan had the responsibility to wake Chinese people up and bring them to understanding their proper ascription in order to accomplish the integration of Asia, which had never been accomplished nor imagined yet (Rōyama, 1938).

As discussed in the last chapter, this switch from geopolitical objectivity to subjectivity was already seen in Haushofer. Yet, his challenge was still a half-baked one, for he was an outsider to the Pacific and still held an objective position to the subject of analysis. By contrast, in Rōyama's geopolitics, the analyst was inevitably embedded in the reality as he analysed his own space. Inspired by German geopolitics, the reality acknowledged by Rōyama was that Japan was part of Asia and not that of the West. Locating his political ideal in the tradition of Japan, Rōyama considered the ideal to be what had to be expanded to the outside world in order to make his cosmopolitan ideal come true. For him, the Pacific order was much more peaceful than the confrontational order of the Atlantic. This was the subjective truth about Japan found by Rōyama *qua* a Japanese that both the West and China had not yet realised. Therefore, the 'destiny' of Japan was to form a new global society by relying on Japan's 'philosophy of harmony', in contrast to Western science which tended to

facilitate conflicts (Rōyama, 1938b: 11). It should be noted that Japan and Asia were confounded in Rōyama's argument, which ended up rendering a unified Asia, if not the entire globe, as his analytical space.

Incoherent as it may sound with the post-war common belief on Japan's fanatic nationalism of the pure Yamato race, this idea of 'beyond the nation-state' was shared widely among academics, politicians, and militarists. In this discourse, Japan was depicted as a mixed race. The Emperor's role was assumed to be the symbol of this greater expansive order based on cultural affinity, which was widely called '*Tōyō* humanism' (Shōwa Kenkyūkai, 1939; Nishida, 1982[1940]; Ishiwara, 1940), and not necessarily the symbol of Japan as a pure nation. Moreover, because society under this particular order was assumed to be peaceful and never confrontational, it could expand even beyond Asia. As chapter 4 has explicated, Japan was perceived as the integrative repository of diverse Asian cultures (Okakura, 1920). What had been crucial for the advocates of this idea was, as seen in Rōyama's assertion, that the Japanese *happened to* have developed such a superior order by virtue of their unique geography and history. Put differently, the Japanese believed they were superior because they were a mixed race. Human will emerged through the interaction between humans and the environment.¹⁵ Hence, Rōyama therefore employed geopolitics not out of necessity, but for this unconscious autonomy that was shared tacitly within a group of people (Matsuzawa, 1962: 262-272).

Thus, *Daitōa Chiseigaku* was an idealistic theory that argued for perpetual and co-prosperous peace among nations, in complete contrast to the conventional understanding of geopolitics today as a justification of war. However, even if it was allegedly opposed to the idea of national interests and therefore the European mode of power, it did not disavow power altogether. Instead, all societies have their own power structure, and Rōyama merely argued for another mode of power. The Japanese during this particular period found 'the truth' in the 'Asian way' of organising space. The ideal was perceived as Asia's forgotten reality due to European suppression. By categorising Japan as 'have-nots', in contrast to E. H. Carr's criticism of his own home country (Matsuzawa, 1962: 255-256; Sakai, 2007: 141), Rōyama saw geopolitics as a philosophical weapon arguing for the political ideal of co-prosperity among nations, as a way to confront the individualistic power politics from Europe. For him, the

¹⁵ See the discussion on this 'will' in Nishida's thought in chapter 3.

reality of power was that it revealed who was just. Japan would rule the world as geography endowed it with power. Authorised by geography, Japan came to realise its '*honzen no sei*' (the natural disposition given by Heaven) (Matsuzawa, 1962: 274). Indeed, for the Japanese, this ideal contained a danger of being 'misunderstood' as a harsh realist theory by other Asians, since it saw Japan's ideal as the one and only reality.

6.3. The State as an Organism in Japanese Geopolitics

According to Yamaguchi (1943: 229), geopolitics came to be known to a wider public from around 1935. It gained popularity among politicians, military personnel, and the business community. In academia, by contrast, despite Rōyama's work, geographers in general kept distance from geopolitics until around 1940. Apart from the fact that earlier applications were followed by few, for those geographers who had already been familiar with Ratzel's theory and German geopolitics, the organismic theory of the state and the concept of *Lebensraum* were rather anachronistic, imperialistic even (Kawanishi, 1933; Obara, 1936; Iizuka, 1942-1943; Watanuki, 1942; Yamaguchi, 1943; Motokawa, 1943). However, in the wake of the implementation of the GEACPS in early 1940s, many geographers began to reengage in the debate. Accordingly, their discussion focused on how to re-evaluate the organismic theory with a view to avoid anachronism.

The state as a living organism was an integral part of classical geopolitics because it represents the power of the state. However, as seen in the last chapter, this theory was in fact very complicated, containing contradictory connotations on the term 'organism' and varied forms of power relations. However, such cognitive gaps between those perspectives have been largely neglected in the course of mutation, and therefore left intact in the theory. Accordingly, the concept of 'organism' had become polymorphous, which further induced incongruous interpretations.

Let me briefly review the discussion on the theory of the state as a living organism in the last chapter. Ratzel's original theorisation was rather literal, portraying the state as a lower organism. Kjellén was interested in the organic nexus between territory and people's experience. At the heart of his geopolitics was 'the understanding of the state as an acting subject' (Komaki, 1942: 68), which was realised by the Europeans living through the Concert of Europe and the First World War (Ogawa, 1928a). Finally, Haushofer went further by focusing on the will of humans in a particular geographical

environment. We see here the precipitously changing perception of state power among Europeans between the final decade of the nineteenth century and around the 1930s. In Ratzel's concept, power lies in nature, and he was overwhelmingly impinged by Darwin's theory. By contrast, for Kjellén, the power holder was the state itself conceptualised as a super-individual. In his theory, environment actually played only a secondary role. In Haushofer's geopolitics, more power was given to *Volk* in the state, further reducing the importance of geographical factors for the state, because for him, as a German, the power of the state and accordingly geography had already become less reliable.

In Japan, as I will explicate below, whilst the locus of power was apparently occupied by the state, the centre of power was replaceable with no stable referent, and the discretion of power was conferred to geography *per se*. In other words, in the Japanese conception, geography restored the power of the state, though in a different way. To explain this particular construct of power, I will now introduce Ezawa Jōji's discussion.

Space as Lebensform

Ezawa called the complexity of the organismic theory 'the duality of geopolitics'. He argued that although geopolitics gave the impression of being a reactionary thought in antagonism to the flourishing of sociology, it in fact aggressively employed modern sociological thinking (Ezawa, 1940: 81; see also Cahnman, 1943; Murphy, 1997). For him, the key to understanding this confusion was the concept of space which had not been fully theorised by the Europeans (1944: 9). Ratzel's theory considered physical space and any phenomenon that is understood as a transformation of this space (ibid.: 12, 30-31). Geopolitics, on the contrary, was concerned with *Lebensform*, with which we live in reality. It was the 'fundamental meaning which fills our life', and therefore not a physical space. Thus, Ezawa insisted, geopolitics had to understand space from a 'perspective of mental science'. In doing so, he aimed to dissolve 'the contradiction without losing methodological coherence' (1940: 81).

In comparison to political geography, the peculiar characteristics of geopolitics was, Ezawa argued, its embedded-ness, by which he meant that 'the national land, as the analytical object of geopolitics', was understood as 'the objectification of the entire structural relations based on our experience' and never independent from the cognitive subject. *Lebensform*, as the fundamental meaning of people's life, was paraphrased as

‘the entire relations between our styles of living’ which had to be ‘objectified’, and was therefore comprehended in relation to people’s affects. In other words, *Lebensform* was about how people ‘feel’ about their own land. This objectification was promoted when a *Lebensform* confronted another *Lebensform*. Through the process, *Lebensraum* became a ‘*kokudo*’ (national land), the ‘body of a nation’ (Ezawa, 1944: 18). The state as *Lebensraum* was spatialised only when it was given meaning through *Lebensform*, the objectification of people’s life. The people living in the *kokudo*, the cognitive subject, were referred to as *minzoku* (*Volk*), who developed a particular *Lebensform*. In other words, a *minzoku* was historically constructed according to the ‘affinity of experiences’. Simultaneously, territory as their *kokudo* was formed as the objectification of the *minzoku*’s style of living. Hence, *kokudo* was the external manifestation of people’s collective experiences, indicating the historically constructed power of its *minzoku*. *Minzoku* was thus dependent on and never detached from the land in which it inhabited, even though the land was spatialised by their will. For Ezawa, *kokudo* and *minzoku*, the cognitive object and subject respectively, were mutually constituted through this interdependent relation, and this dynamic character was what distinguished geopolitics from political geography.¹⁶ *Lebensraum* had to be reconceptualised as *kokudo* in this particular meaning in geopolitics (Ezawa, 1944: 10-24).

Minzoku

In wartime discourse in Japan, the term *minzoku* became an extraordinarily influential concept. A large volume of policy documents on Japan’s world policy, written by a research team at the Health and Welfare Ministry in 1943, defined *minzoku* as a cultural concept of a group of people, as opposed to the biological concept of race (*shuzoku*), even though both were deeply related. According to the document (Population and Minzoku Division, the Health and Welfare Ministry Research Institute, 1982: 29), *minzoku* was ‘*a priori* in relation to individual experience’, as all humans were born into a community of a specific *minzoku*. Despite the significance of this, it was considered ‘extremely shaky, variable, and fluid that a new *minzoku* can be formed gradually or even abruptly’, because different *minzokus* could be awaken

¹⁶ According to Rosenboim (2015: 2), both the American geopolitician Nikolas Spykman and a leading American Sinologist called Owen Lattimore, understood geopolitics as ‘dynamic’, and rejected the static and deterministic perception of geography.

as one unified *minzoku*, when geographical, cultural, material, historical, and other proximities between different *minzokus* came to be acknowledged by a certain historical event (ibid.: 35-37). In this respect, *minzoku* was composed by a centripetal force. Tessa Morris-Suzuki (1998: 32) argues that whilst this Japanese concept anticipated more recent debates on the social construction of race and nation, in its time it provided a ‘convenient blurring between the cultural and genetic aspects of ethnicity, while emphasising the organic unity of the Japanese people’.

The question asked in this thesis is neither whether the term was progressive, nor whether it was convenient. Instead, the question is why Japanese people understood the formation of social groups in this particular way as an unusually accessible term. The term was, as Morris-Suzuki (1998: 87) puts it, ‘a continuous slippage backward and forward between different levels of justification’ in Japan in this period. That is, this concept enabled people to comprehend the rapidly changing landscape of the international political map, because the concept manifested Japan’s specific social relations and power. It foretold the outcome of the fluidisation of the world map. For Ezawa, the object of analysis in geopolitics was this malleable concept of *minzoku*, not the state (Ezawa, 1944). Seeing the union of the land of man as an intimately evolving relation, he insisted that geopolitics was idiographic and not nomothetic, because, following Kjellén, ‘*kokudo* cannot change its place’ and is therefore unique. The identification of *minzoku* rested on *kokudo*, which should not be understood as a mere physical space, but instead as ‘the basis of communal affects’, an ‘externalisation of the *minzoku*’s worldview’ based on an ‘affinity of experiences’ (Ezawa, 1940: 84). The organisation of space in geopolitics has to be understood in this ‘semantic nexus’ (1944: 23), rather than in causal logic, and was the result of the interactions between people and geography, in which space was to be organised voluntarily and properly. Here, the similarity to Rōyama’s concept of society is obvious.

Ecological Determinism?

As in Rōyama’s theory, geography also had the ultimate discretion in Ezawa’s theory, highlighting its deterministic nature, even though Ezawa placed stronger emphasis on agency. While it may appear that Ezawa’s emphasis on people’s will downgraded the importance of environmental factors as merely consequential, this ‘will’ in fact could also be identified in Rōyama’s argument (cf. Kawanishi, 1942a). For Ezawa, this ‘will’ was, like Rōyama’s ideal, a tacitly-shared collective intuition embedded in the

geographical community (cf. Ibert, 2007). *Lebensform* was the objectification of the historically constructed structural relations based on the subjects' own perception. Here, Nishida's two sense of consciousness, discussed in chapter 3, can clarify the apparent confusion. The collective will, for Ezawa, was based on Nishida's idea of 'consciousness that is conscious', and not on 'consciousness that one is conscious of' (Nishida, 1926b: 54). The objectification of *Lebensform* essentially relied on this less-than-conscious but collective will. Hence, the social structure could not be subject to people's explicit consciousness. Conceiving of human will in this way, Ezawa believed that the future could be foretold by examining historical patterns of interaction in a particular *kokudo*, because these patterns were governed not by rational thinking but by relational unconsciousness. And because they were in the unconscious realm, they had to be repetitive in nature. Focusing on the ecology between *minzoku* and *kokudo*, rather than on geography itself, he concluded that the usefulness of geopolitics was this possibility to foresee the future, indicated by the intimate relations.

Therefore, the decisive factor in determining Japan's future was found in this ecological space. The future became predictable by investigating the 'acting-intuition' of a collective subject as Ezawa (1940: 88) put it, apparently drawing on Nishida's term but without mentioning his name. Here, we see a vague, common recognition between Iimoto, the first Japanese geopolitician discussed in the last chapter, Rōyama, and Ezawa. For all three geopoliticians, it was geography that held the discretion of power. The difference between their ideas is that whilst for the first two, geography was an embodiment of the socio-organic ideal, for Ezawa, it was what had to be investigated for theoretical usage. In Ezawa's discussion, *minzoku* was the indicator of power but not the power holder. Power was something that existed in-between; it required an endorsement because society developed according to the intuitive interactions among humans, rather than according to the rational choices of individuals. Hence, the superior *minzoku* had to be endorsed by something transcendental. The malleable *minzoku* was a mere conceptual vehicle of power. The living organism was an embodiment of this in-between power arisen through human interactions. Thus, in Japanese geopolitics, the state was likewise a mere embodiment of power. The fate of a *minzoku* was determined by a specific disposition of *kokudo*, which itself was nurtured in relation to the *minzoku*, and power resided in this relation. Because of this, the embodiment of power was always in flux.

Ezawa elaborated his own idiographic approach of *minzoku* in 1944. He conceptualised *minzoku* as a divergent category from the concept of race in the natural sciences, arguing that while the latter was detached from the inherent meaning of one's living space, the former in geopolitics was not since it was understood in semantic sequence. The approach taken in Ratzelian environmentalism was, for Ezawa, not appropriate for his ecological geopolitical theory, because it was likewise nomothetic and founded upon causal logic, neglecting the role of meaning.

His starting point was Thomas G. Taylor's ethnography employed in *Environment, Race, and Migration* (1937). Ezawa called attention to the point that Taylor distinguished between four types of races based on three regions, namely the Eurafrian peninsula, the Austracian peninsula, and the American peninsula. Ezawa argued that whilst Taylor's categorisation rested on races as the standard in any given region, what geopolitics was interested in was the point that the migration of each race implies a unique direction. That is, while Taylor categorised peoples based on their objective differences, Ezawa was more concerned with the subjective sameness as perceived by the actors. For Ezawa, the direction of migration indicated the unique sense of living of each *minzoku*. He asserted that, '[w]e understand that the region of Austracia becomes a unified space as the consequence of a semantic nexus'. Migrating to the same direction, the *minzokus* in the region had historically nurtured a 'common sentiment', rendering Austracia a place for mutual empathy among Asians (Ezawa, 1944: 44-51).

Natural resource was likewise understood in relation to people and geography in Ezawa's works. 'Geopolitical resource' was for him 'ethnographic (*minzoku*) resource'. These resources form *kokudo* as a semantic nexus and unify *minzoku* in this concatenation. Consequently, 'the geopolitical meaning of a resource is measured by the extent the will of *minzoku* is reflected in the production of the resource' (Ezawa, 1944: 56-57). Ezawa gave the example of the production of rubber in Southeast Asia, which he viewed as geopolitically wrong because it was jeopardising the native's independence while fulfilling the Europeans' demands (ibid.: 58). Therefore, as a 'geopolitical necessity', Japan had to intervene and re-unite Asia, where European imperialism had destroyed its 'geopolitical integrity'. The *Minzoku* of *Tōa* (East Asia) needed to be aware of their common destiny, and Japan's role was to facilitate this awareness (Ezawa, 1944: 90-91).

Thus, Ezawa's organism could be expanded beyond national borders to the whole Asia also without any friction. The mission would be accomplished by enhancing the organic relations among Asians, or 'Austracians', setting aside any physical, and in fact geographical, difference. Such formulation possibly contradicted Ezawa's assertion of *kokudo* as a unique place, but this contradiction was negligible because the basis of his understanding of society was *Lebensform*, suggesting 'mutual empathy' and a 'shared sense of destiny' (Ezawa, 1943: 235). Stressing the form of living as the basis of categorisation for geopolitics, he conceived of society as a centripetal and permeable, rather than bounded, structure. The requirement of common identity was only a sense of sameness, whatever small it might be. As discussed in chapter 4, the Japanese often comprehended another people as part of them rather than a pure 'other', and this was possible because their epistemology was based on the perception of sameness rather than difference. This particular epistemic tradition made the Japanese state an absorbent and profoundly expansive organism.

The rapidly changing political climate had jeopardised the Japanese's isolated stance in the world since the Meiji Restoration. The era asked the Japanese as a coloured race to take the side of either the West or the rest. Subsequently their theorisation of geopolitics diverged from the others not only to oppose the imperialist practice of the West, but also because it made more sense for them in reference to their own practice. They translated the geopolitical theory not only through rational thinking but through their historically developed mode of thinking in the first place. In doing so, their site-specific practice turned the German narrative to the Japanese discourse for war.

Symbolic Power in Unstructured Structure

In many ways, *Daitōa Chiseigaku* looks totally inversed to the geopolitics that is known today. To illustrate, in line with geopolitics, *Daitōa Chiseigaku* asserted that in the GEACPS, peoples were connected through blood (*chi*) as well as soil (*chi*), which became a pun based on the incidentally identical pronunciations of the two words in the Japanese language. However, in Japan, this familiar phrase of 'blood and soil' in geopolitics in fact meant that blood was shared through the earth (Kawahara, 1943), and therefore connoted not a confrontation between different bloods, but a forceful inclusion of bloods through the earth—family, the state, and Asia were one, since all of them shared a blood through an expansive living space (Nakahara, 1944).

This argument was made possible because, as evidenced in Ezawa's argument, the state was a historical and social organic ideal evolving limitlessly in an intimate relation between *minzoku* and *kokudo* (see also Kunimatsu, 1944a). Indeed, this organism of the state is living in the unstructured structure (see chapter 2), where the self and the other are living together side by side without boundaries. In this unstructured structure, power becomes the possession of no one, but is something diffused and actualised through place where people live, making the place borderless in practice. Placing stress on experiences and accordingly forms of living, the organism paradoxically transgresses geographical confinement.

Some may notice the absence of the Emperor in these arguments. This is because, as stated in the previous chapters, the Emperor was the symbol of power *relations* and not the symbol of power. The person occupying the locus of power was in fact, changeable. During the first half of the twentieth century, the locus, which had been occupied by the West since the Meiji Restoration, was yielded to the Emperor. This might sound odd given that it was the Emperor who restored the throne in the middle of the nineteenth century. However, as Oguma Eiji (2000) argues, this Emperor wore a Western outfit and was not the one in a traditional guise. An example that illustrates this confusion is the original Japanese term for Meiji Restoration, *Meiji Ishin*, which in fact is better translated as 'renewal'. In other words, the revolutionary Meiji period was only understood as a continuation. As Yoshimoto Takaaki (1969) points out, throughout Japan's history, the Emperor has been a talisman of power and never the power itself. In this context, the political power since the Meiji Restoration had existed in the idea of the West, and the Emperor was only the embodiment of this ever-changing power as well as continuity. Yet, as the country followed the trajectory of Westernisation and finally became one of the Great Powers, the locus was replaced by Japan's own history, which was but again embodied by the Emperor.¹⁷ Thus, the Emperor himself has always been an empty signifier. Admittedly, it is also this discursive malleability about the Emperor that makes the claim of his political responsibility in the Second World War controversial.¹⁸ (This debate is however beyond the scope of this thesis, and my interest here is the enigmatic mode of power

¹⁷ This elusive power of the Emperor was acknowledged by the Americans during the occupation period. See Takeda (2001).

¹⁸ Some of the latest research on this inquiry are Itō (2011) and Katō (2011). For a more comprehensive inquiry, see Takeda (2001). For research on the changing political narrative and the Emperor system, see Narita (2012).

around the Emperor.) Nonetheless, whoever was occupying the place of the executor (even the Emperor) had in fact no substantial power, but functioned only as a vehicle of power. Natural law decided who would occupy the locus of power. In other words, the Emperor was the talisman not because he was the Emperor, but because the Emperor, but not the person, was the embodiment of nature.

The affinity between this particular mode of power and environmental determinism is obvious. It is doubtful whether German geopolitics would have been as influential in Japan without this unique understanding of power and hence the metamorphosis of environmental determinism. In any case, when such a subjective perspective was applied to the ideal of a researcher's own society, it was only highly likely that such perspective would become nothing but a total affirmation of the society's past. Undeniably, even for a well-elaborated theory such as Ezawa's, *Daitōa Chiseigaku* could maximise one's optimistic and arbitrary imagination, ultimately rejecting intellectualism in favour of 'mental science' as Ezawa put it. The danger was, obviously, that it could be used for political prediction. Ezawa (1940: 81) stated that both Ratzel and Haushofer did not see 'something magnificent' in space. Citing these crucial insights, nevertheless, the solution Ezawa reached in order to resolve the incoherence of geopolitics was by yielding agency to geography, endowing it with 'something magnificent' by ultimately confusing scholarly analyses with their political.

6.4. Geopolitical Imagination in Japan

The final task in this chapter is to explicate Japan's modern geopolitical imagination in a wider intellectual context. This section will do so by weaving together these geopoliticians' writings and some official documents. The main point is that Japan's geopolitical imagination, envisaged as a 'borderless world' (Ohmae, 1990), was existed essentially in popular imagination and was deeply rooted in society, rather than having any practical or formal implication (Ó Tuathail and Dalby, 1998). This thesis does not investigate whether Japanese policy makers had employed geopolitical theories. As Yamazaki Takashi (2013) points out, there is only sparse and unclear evidence to support the popular assumption that geopolitics was abused by the Imperial Government of Japan. At the same time, however, the eighty-odd works I examined undeniably focused on the GEACPS. Many of these works were published in general interest magazines, expanding the group of followers of geopolitics to the

public. Thus, the regionalism depicted by the geopoliticians was already shared in popular imagination, and was, I argue, the formidable effect of geopolitical discourse. Geopolitics helped a certain type of policies make sense at the popular level. Differently put, geopolitics affirmed Japan's foreign policies by articulating the *subjects* in its discourse and not foreign policy *per se*. Only when this articulation was successful could geopolitical discourse exert its power. In wartime Japan, geopolitics remained 'popular geopolitics' (Ó Tuathail and Dalby, 1998) from the outset to the end, even in the writings of the academics.

Richard Samuels points out that in wartime Japan, an enigmatic convergence of the divergent 'ideological dots' onto the GEACPS was observed (2007: 13). The enigma of this congealment which led the country to the Pacific War could be explained by a thorough examination of the historical context. The GEACPS was an assemblage idea where foreign knowledge and indigenous knowledge intersected. Each knowledge had its own history, and therefore contained contradictory ideas. When the diverse elements converged into a geopolitical idea, the convergence would enable the idea to express a remarkable capacity for manifold interpretations. At this intersection, a constellation of intellectuals, regardless of political inclination, interpreted the polymorphous idea in their own contexts, and the remnants of rudimentary misunderstandings almost suddenly crystallised into a manifestation of people's everyday relations, projecting a remarkably powerful popular imagination.

A Borderless World?

At this particular historical juncture, it was the imagination of a borderless regional world that became salient. This imagination was already seen in the theorisations of two prominent writers discussed in the previous sections: While Rōyama's theorisation was more emotionally motivated, Ezawa's was sophisticated and logical, focusing on micro-politics. Despite this difference, the two theories were remarkably similar in their conception of the state as an unbounded space in which people live in relation to each other. This idea was clearly reflected in official documents, an example of which I will present here. From Japan's point of view, the Second Sino-Japanese War was not an official war. Part of the reason for this was technical, as both Japan and China did not declare war (Iwatani, 2015). Yet, how did Japan reason the need for this undeclared war? The guidance for the conflict released in 1937 stated that the government had been 'strongly wishing' the Chinese government to align with Japan

for peace in East Asia (Cabinet Approval on December 24, 1937). That is, the ‘Shino Incident’ as the war was termed required mutual empathy between China and Japan for Japan’s emancipation of China for its true identity as Asians. Therefore, Japan was fighting for Chinese people against the Western ideas that had hampered the coming of peace in Asia and possibly in the whole world.

This line of reasoning would become Japan’s enduring source of justification until at least 1945 and possibly later,¹⁹ including the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, in which Emperor Hirohito assured that his aspiration to fight the war was for ‘common prosperity and happiness of all nations’ (The Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War, 1945).²⁰ In December 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki, in his policy speech on January 21 in the following year, declared the war objective to be the establishment of a new world order. The speech reads:

....the basic policy of the establishment of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere indeed originates from the grand spirit of Japan’s nation-building. In the Sphere, each state and nation will acquire its own proper place in order to establish a co-existing and co-prosperous order based on moral principles whose centre is the Empire (Tōjō, 1942).²¹

Tōjō went on to assert that the regions that would be part of the GEACPS had been ‘so extremely and fiercely abused by Anglo-America and some others that their own cultural development has been significantly hampered’(ibid.). Japan and the idea of the GEACPS would fight for ‘perpetual peace’ in support of such frustration felt by the local Asians. For the Japanese, regionalism was an extension of domestic politics and never an implementation of foreign policy. This understanding was not born out of the fact that part of China was Japan’s colony at that point, but rather out of the belief that any state border, as a Western-centric idea, ought to be erased. Regionalism was perceived not as a strategic choice, but a historical, emotional, and above all, destined consequence.

¹⁹ A post-war example of this is the Counsel’s opening statement in the Tokyo Tribunal.

²⁰ Available at: http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/shiryo/01/017/017_001r.html. [Accessed on 25 September, 2016]

²¹ Available at: <http://www.ioc-u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/pm/19420121.SWJ.html>. [Accessed on 25 September, 2016]

Indeed, in Japanese geopolitics, the concept of border carries much less meaning, if not no meaning at all. To illustrate, Yonekura Jirō argued that historically, conflicts among states in Asia had rarely happened. In Japan at least, the state was acknowledged as given ever since the dawn of history, as clearly seen in Japanese mythology (Yonekura, 1941: 45). Simply put, the state was not an import from the West. It was, according to Nakahara Tōru (1944: 5), a '*Lebensgemeinschaft*', and was neither a legal institution, nor a community of interest or of imagination, whose bond could be strengthened by wars. Nakamura Ryōnosuke (1942: 529) argued that, the borders in Europe drawn by the Treaty of Versailles were the last product of the blind belief on natural science that had flourished in Europe since the Renaissance. Kawahara Jikichirō (1942) asserted that European insistence on the independence of the state and the equality between states was a fallacy that ignored reality. The developments in world economy in the 1920s demonstrated the impossibility of forming closed economic blocs (see also Rōyama, 1938). Equally, British Imperialism all over the world had also reached the limit of its sustainability. The collapse of state borders in Asia was envisaged as a checkmate to the European modern state system whose premises were the independence of each state and hence the equality between states. At the same time, this collapse signalled the decline of European capitalism, as the interdependence of the states had apparently reached an unsustainable degree.

By contrast, the Japanese geopoliticians' idea of regionalism was based upon geographical proximity, which, as Kawahara (1942) had stated, implied a shared destiny. Kawahara insisted that national borders, which had been brought into Asia to deceive the natives, had to be expunged: Mankind could do without any type of borders, even that of the GEACPS, so long as the centre of *Lebensform* was established (Kawahara, 1943). Nakamura (1944: 538-539) stated that in Asia, where a 'cooperative worldview not by intellect but by will' had existed historically, the concept of territory was 'fundamentally different from that in the West'. In Asia, 'the order is not stabilised by boundaries'; instead, 'regions' were created out of the order. As Ezawa had argued, geopolitics was a theory of subjectivity that investigated the dynamic aspects of the state. In this dynamic, what should be identified was the centre and the subject, which in the GEACPS was Japan (Kawahara, 1942). Nakahara maintained that 'geopolitical blood relations' were based on subjectivity. The globalisation of what he calls 'geopolitical state' that has no borders would allow

people to notice that ‘we all are humans’. Therefore, he asked: Was Rudyard Kipling right in saying that ‘East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet’?

The Ocean as a Web of Association

In this borderless world, relations and associations were given more focus. In Japanese geopolitical imagination, seas and oceans played the role of relating peoples together. As Kōyama Iwao (1942) stated, seas and oceans had played the remarkable, dualistic role of blockade and connection in Japanese history, best represented in the historical event of *kaikoku* (opening of the country). In chapter 4, I have already explained how the notion of *Nan-yō* (the South), which vaguely corresponded to South Pacific, had been seen as the imagined roots of the Japanese since the late nineteenth century. In addition, European geopoliticians had stressed Japan’s geopolitical advantage of being a maritime nation (see chapter 5). Above all, ‘blood and soil’ obviously would not suffice as medium to connect peoples, as Japan was an island nation. Historically, the island-studded sea in Asia had been a space for networking rather than a void (cf. Steinberg, 2001; Hamashita, 1999).

As the war escalated, especially after the invasion into French Indochina in 1940, *Nan-yō* came to occupy the centre of the imaginative map. Semantically, with ‘East Asia’ clearly gestured in the name of GEACPS, Japan’s penetration into the continent was considered to be an insistence on the part of the Imperial Army, who had seized leadership in the government, whilst Southing via the sea route was originally an idea of the Imperial Navy. Later, as Germany continued to advance in Europe, the Japanese army also started to support the Southern Expansion Doctrine. Yet, as the war heated up, the regions that was called as South and East Asia were significantly enlarged, with the ocean being a limitless mediation of the enlargement (Yano, 1975: 156).

As Watsuji’s best-selling book *Fūdo* (chapter 4) and Haushofer (chapter 5) asserted, ‘monsoon’ was a keyword in this discourse, and its meaning as sea breeze developed over the ocean played a metaphorical role that stressed the shared destiny between the Japanese and the Asians. Satō (1942: 132) equally insisted that in the South, and likewise in Japan, Manchuria, and China, the monsoon rain was a ‘basis of living’ of the people (see also Yonekura, 1941; Kawanishi, 1942a). Here, the ocean came to express the routes the ancestors of the Japanese had followed through both the islands in the South Pacific Ocean and the Asiatic continent via the Sea of Japan, thus

vindicating the Japanese archipelago's role as a repository of *minzoku* (Iwata, 1942c; see chapter 4).

Therefore, it was the Pacific Ocean that gave the Japanese race a superior disposition as a maritime nation that could 'know the world, redress inequality, mediate peoples, improve the *Lebensform* of each other in order to attain peace and co-prosperity' (Nishimura, 1942: 56; see also Iwata, 1942c). For them, the Ocean was the mediator that drew the country into the modern world (Hirano and Kiyono, 1942). Accordingly, a 'marine geopolitics' was proposed (Kunimatsu, 1944b; see also Uda, 1943). In an extreme example, it was even argued that 'the ocean, as a person that holds personality', had to be 'objectified to organise a *Lebensraum*', where water was equated as earth (Kamakura, 1940: 34-35). Therefore, the sea between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean had to be called the 'Asia-Australia Mediterranean Sea' (*Yomiuri Shimbun*, 1942), because it was *mare nostrum* of the GEACPS. Finally, there were even assertions that, as the natives in the American continents were originally from Asia, the whole Pacific Ocean was the Ocean that belonged to Asians (Komaki, 1943).

Proper Places: Regions as a 'Rigid' Hierarchical Order

Even if the new order stressed morality and the spiritual bond in an unbounded space, it still required a certain principle to become an order. In Japanese geopolitical imagination, this was imagined as a hierarchical order rested on a notion of human progress and evolution, which made its structure paradoxically rigid. It was conceived as a gigantic, unified, expansive organism, which might be closer to Ratzel's idea of lower organism than Kjellén's super human being (see chapter 5). This is where the Japanese version of Social Darwinism, i.e. ecological fatalism, was applied. Its main points were already outlined in the last chapter. The remarkable difference with Ratzel's idea was that in the Japanese version, there existed only one gigantic, unified organism integrating all the organisms on the globe.

As we have seen, the profound question that the Japanese intellectuals tried to address was one about particularity and universality in world history. Japanese people, having pursued modernisation by employing Western political theories, reached an unexpected gap. In the meantime, they noticed another gap that distinguished them from other Asian countries. In particular, the destiny of China, whose territory was divided by the Great Powers, was telling, not least because the country was Japan's

former teacher. In search for a convincing explanation, they found a clue in Japan's geography and history. The most compelling point of contention was, for them, to assume different goals at the end of universal progress, rather than fully acknowledging plurality. Thus, they presumed that each *minzoku* must have its each destined role. Only by interpreting in this way could the Japanese experience bear a 'worldwide significance' in spite of its geographical peripherality in relation to the West as centre (Rōyama, 1938: 2).

As Dower (1986) brilliantly puts it, this 'proper place theorizing' showed a remarkable versatility throughout the war and even during the post-war period in Japan.²² The material that most remarkably reflected this idea was the series of documents written by a research team at the Health and Welfare Ministry in 1943²³, which have already mentioned in the previous section. The main focus of the documents titled 'A Study on *Weltpolitic* Centred on Yamato Race' was *minzoku*. According to this publication, *minzoku* was an extremely fluid category, and the Japanese were no exception: '[t]hat it [the Japanese] is not composed by one race is the truth that no one doubts' (Administration Division, The Health and Welfare Minister's Secretariat, 1943b: 2202). The point here is that although the Japanese is perceived as a mixed race, it became an 'integrated' race during the period of *sakoku*, purified by its historico-geographical factors. The hybridity (and purity) was a vindication of the extreme flexibility of the Japanese race, a disposition Japan had nurtured in its peculiar ecology as an island country. *Minzoku* had to be premised upon a 'community of blood based on spatial identity'. The forthcoming new world order was a 'moralistic order' where the strong and the weak would live together, in contrast to the 'ancient' regime in international society constructed upon power politics (ibid.: 2197-98, 2312-17). However, importantly, it would be incorrect to say that all nations would be equal under this new order. The community would have to be an organism in the sense that it 'let all nations gain their own proper place' according to their capability. This was important because 'it is unequal to see equal what is not equal' (ibid.: 2320). The documents described the governing scheme for the East Asian

²² There are numerous official documents referring to this proper place theory, such as the statement made by Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yōsuke on 1st August, 1940 (Miwa, 1981); the preamble to the tripartite pact of 1940 between Japan, Germany and Italy; several Imperial Rescripts (1940, 1941); and *Shinmin no Michi* (*The Way of Subjects*) published by the Education Ministry in 1941.

²³ The documents were later 'discovered' and published in eight volumes under the title *Minzoku Jinkō Seisaku Kenkyū Shiryō* (*Policy Research Materials of Minzoku and Population*) in 1982. It was said that many of the wartime documents were burned by the Japanese government before the occupation.

minzoku. Claiming that the fundamental principle of the scheme was ‘co-existence and co-prosperity’, it suggested that *minzoku* had an ‘inevitable destiny’ to form a cooperative community. Because the East Asia Cooperative Community was not fixed but generative and evolving, whose sphere is incrementally expanding, the ultimate ideal of the cooperative community was ‘to make the whole world under one roof’. Because the Japanese were ‘at this moment’ only one independent race in the organic community, it ‘naturally’ occupied the leading position endowed by its geography and history (ibid: 2331-2334).

Conclusion

Daitōa Chiseigaku was an inverted theory of European Geopolitics as the latter is understood today. It was idealistic rather than realistic, anti-scientific rather than scientific, subjectivist rather than objectivist, historical rather than a-historical. At least for the Japanese who were arguing for regionalism, it was inclusive rather than exclusive, and therefore peaceful rather than confrontational. The imagination that was projected as a result of the importation was different. In Japanese geopolitics, the state as a living organism was supposed to expand limitlessly, subsuming possibly all peoples on the globe. In this particular imagination, the ‘heavily mythologized triad of state-territory-community’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 230) of the Westphalian state was from the outset non-existent. This was because, in the Japanese tradition, the mythology of the state had been formed differently. In chapters 5 and 6, I have argued that Japanese geopolitics was fundamentally a product of Japan’s own history, just like European geopolitics was a product of Europe’s. Although geopolitics was an import, the Cartesian objectivism that had once buttressed the theory was unwittingly replaced by a long-standing context-dependent tradition in Japan, which might be called relational subjectivism. Thus, the imported theory was activated when it was supported by local practice.

This thesis, however, has not argued that a geopolitical theory can successfully migrate once the underlying *basso ostinato* is replaced. By emphasizing the cognitive gap, the thesis aimed to demonstrate the contingency and paradoxical inevitability of migration. The geopolitical theory was accepted by the Japanese because it offered a subjectivity to Japanese people. Because of this, the theory was mutated as the subjectivity defined the law to which it was subject. In this respect, geopolitics in Japan was the retriever of a forgotten tradition. As it made the Japanese realise the

importance of political space, the Japanese recalled a neglected gap in the imported geographical concepts engendered in the course of interpretation. Geopolitics encouraged scholars to reconceptualise and even re-name oceans and islands. The Japanese scholars, who apparently had not questioned for decades the meaning of imported geographical concepts from Europe such as 'the state', suddenly began to doubt what those concepts meant as they consulted geopolitics. The replacement of concepts was an accident, a part of a much larger social phenomenon. It was not geopolitics that created the policies; it only supported them. Therefore, the geopolitical imagination was fundamentally performative, and could not have been imposed by state elites or by foreign knowledge.

The alterations to the concepts, theories and ideas were forgotten equally precipitously once the war was over, probably because the continuous transformation of meaning did not require any consensus (given that the system with which one makes sense functions essentially in unconscious realm), and also because a particular meaning, developed largely upon a cognitive void in relation to the outside, was performed only within the community of experience in a particular period and therefore unnoticed from the outside. Moreover, the community is always in flux because of the concentric nature.

Yet is the observation above particularly true for geographical theories? The findings of this thesis suggest that a slightly more obvious tendency exists for geographical terms than for other political concepts and theories. As has been demonstrated, the theory of the state as a living organism differed substantially even within Europe, although the voids were seldom explained or investigated due to the belief that the meaning of the concept was considered to be self-evident. Yet, it has also been argued that the meaning of geographical concepts is actually highly context-dependent. Such negligence in the gap of meaning arises because the materiality of geography elides the necessity to affirm meanings. However, what is overlooked is that the landscape imagined as the background for a concept can be significantly different among us. As Said (2003: 54) claims, the imaginative geography of the self does not require a consensus between the self and the other. Once the difference is acknowledged, however, the materiality that supported the concreteness of meaning would, on the contrary, open up new questions.

Let me address the question from a slightly different perspective. Why did Haushofer avoid theorising geopolitics? As Heske (1987: 137) identifies, one reason

must have been to reserve the flexibility of his geopolitics as an applied science. At the same time, we can infer that for Haushofer, living in a particular era of turbulence in which people were anxious in believing the bright future of the state, the self-evident-ness of the state had to remain unchallenged and unshakable. The same could be said for wartime Japan: Geography was the only reality on which the Japanese could rely. Yet, on which geography shall one rely, and how to rely on such geography, depended on the contexts *and* the subjects. The social circumstances and the geographies of Germany and Japan during the period were substantially different. Despite these differences, both people tried to seek sameness among them. Evidently, it was geography that helped people associate the heterogeneous elements in the so-called universal theory, which however had not received thorough theoretical investigations in practice. It was indeed this self-evident-ness of geography which was however comprehended differently that made geopolitical theory paradoxically kaleidoscopic through the voyages, rendering such theory ‘a fiction’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 15) that was convenient for every people living in different spatio-temporal contexts.

Last but not least, what was it in geopolitics that contributed to the war cause? Under this perspective, what come to the fore are the different imaginations, rather than boundaries. Here, boundaries are not constructed out of confrontational discourses, but instead emerge from the in-between of diverged discourses, the differences among which are in fact neglected. In this way, the shift of focus away from boundaries to the centre does demonstrate another key aspect in international politics.

Conclusion: A Successful Journey?

This thesis has charted the trajectory of geopolitics as it migrated from Germany to Japan in the first half of the twentieth century. The travel could ultimately be considered a success, since geopolitics was enthusiastically accepted in popular imagination, and used to justify Japan's entry in the Second World War. However, the appropriation was not 'literal' or 'as it is', for Japan did not follow the model of European-style imperialist expansion, but instead sought to contest Europe's domination of the world, only to end up dragging other people into its plans unjustly. In Japan, geopolitics as a traveling theory did not disseminate the European geopolitical gaze, but instead gave rise to a local and particular geopolitical view. It enabled Japanese people to realise how geography had affected the state of affairs in their political community. Replacing the subject of the theory and inflecting its power structure, Japanese geopolitics was accepted by the locals as the underlying way of thinking. In this way, a putatively realist theory was converted into an idealist theory. In absolute contrast to European geopolitics as a theory for the state, Japanese scholars attempted to justify, with the converted theory, the eradication of all boundaries in attempting to make the world one. For these scholars, the state was not imagined as a territorially-confined space, but a comprehensive entity that had a concentric structure without borders and would expand limitlessly to incorporate any people.

In the post-war world order, however, this conceptual metamorphosis has been forgotten by Japanese scholars and beyond, as can be seen in the current narrative that portrays Imperial Japan as a rigorous enforcer of racial purity. From this standpoint, Japan came to be perceived as *the* state that however behaved abnormally occasionally. By contrast, this thesis analysed Japan as *a* state, and demonstrated through the reconstruction of context that the abnormal state can be reconsidered as a different type of modern state, where the theory of the state was only comprehended differently. That is to say, it was not simply the presence of a consensus, but also the very absence of such a consensus, that helped disseminate the theory of geopolitics. In Japan, as in many other countries, foreign ideas were accepted when a relation was forged with a local idea. The different ideas were only superficially integrated with one another, leaving an unrecognised unsynthesisable void among multiple analytical spaces. In the course of the voyage, geopolitics, particularly the theory of the state as a living

organism, engendered many of such cognitive voids as the materiality of geography allowed its learners to consider the theory as self-evident. However, the uniqueness of every landscape allowed and assisted people to interpret the perceived axiom creatively. In this respect, the theory was never exclusively for *the state*. Thus, the theory was continuously morphed as it moved from one spatio-temporal context to another; the substantial transformations were either barely perceptible or forgotten from the outside of the community.

Ever since the end of the Cold War, critical scholars have tried to find alternatives to substitute the geopolitical discourse of the divided world, arguing for the plurality of geopolitics. The contribution I hope to have made with this thesis is to raise a different set of questions through excavating the neglected aspects in geopolitics in Japan, this most ardent follower of Western modernity. The quest for an alternative discourse is often represented as a move towards the prefix ‘post-’. However, this prefix requires us to delineate global intellectual history as *the* history, obliging a researcher to postulate that global knowledge production is governed solely by the West as the powerful. Critical theory invites scholars to doubt any premise, particularly a premise that claims objectivity. Nonetheless, it is likely that this postulation does not doubt the existence of the premise *per se*. By contrast, this thesis questions such analysis of global intellectual history as a single lineage, and reconsiders what alternatives there can be not only for the West but for plural subjects.

Daitōa Chiseigaku, a geopolitics nurtured in a context-dependent epistemic tradition in contrast to the logocentric Western tradition, had much more in common with critical geopolitics than with classical geopolitics as it is understood today. To be sure, in reference to the discussions today, this geopolitics might be better apprehended as a ‘reformed positivism’ (Smith, 2000) or a ‘reverse Orientalism’ (Nakano, 2010), since the discourse had in the end forced the others to accept a new standard of civilisation. However, the perspective of this geopolitics was still closer to that of critical geopolitics as it emphasised context, subjectivity, and historicity, and also argued for particularity. Labelling this geopolitics ‘post-positivist’ is however emphatically problematic given its regressive character. On the other hand, neglecting the similarity between Japanese and critical geopolitics is equally problematic given the motivation of the critical geopolitical enterprise. If hegemony is a ‘political *type of relation*’, as Laclau and Mouffe (1985: 139-140, emphasis in original) have argued, the plurality of political space has to be ‘the starting point of analysis’. This thesis

attempted to understand this plurality by hypothesising that it is the actual plurality of knowledge that supports the homogeneity on the surface. By focusing on spaces of politics rather than the politics of space, my work is an effort to reconsider how spatiality is manifest in the process of subjectification in global knowledge creation and dissemination. In so doing, I made it a point in this thesis to view any binary as relational for a better picture of plurality.

The aspiration of critical geopolitics was to overcome the boundary-making practices of the Great Powers. The borderless world Japanese geopolitics envisaged, on the other hand, questions this aspiration. In order to untangle this dilemma, this thesis has proposed to shift the focus from ‘boundary’ to the ‘inside’ of a community. An analogous concept can perform different meanings in different geographical spaces. If the state is an imagined community as the late Benedict Anderson (2006) has claimed, this imagination has to accompany each unique landscape that inspires the lived experiences of a community, thus making any state merely *a state*. What is needed then is a nuanced comparative perspective *in addition to* the one that emphasises the socialising aspect of the formation of the world of modern states. Without giving thought to this neglected difference, the quest for either eradicating borders or embracing difference has at best lukewarm success. We need to consider the possibility that an alternative can become alternatives, and to further elaborate on this, I will revisit in the following all the conclusions to my chapters in terms of a pair of questions. First, how can we consider plurality and difference in world politics? Second, what links the plural spaces up to form a global development? Finally, in the last section, I will briefly sketch out an agenda for future research.

Differences in World Politics

In order to explicate the different comprehensions of geopolitics, the present thesis approached the process of interpretation from two perspectives—a physical location and a hidden intellectual standpoint—and highlighted the importance of the latter. The first three chapters demonstrated that the fundamentally different understandings of politics are engendered less from what we see, but more from how we think. We spend our everyday life in a particular space. Although this space always undergoes relentless transformations, a stabilised image of this space tends to stay in our memory as the repetitive nature of the everyday. In this way, we construct our own place, which is still shared as a space with the others in a community. In this relational place-space,

a people would often come to form a loosely shared way of thinking. Spatiality in this way surreptitiously dictates the act of thinking even though thinking itself might be an act in solitude. Framing this less-than-conscious way of thinking as *basso ostinato*, this thesis attempted to capture the unrecognised mutation of theory. Taking an abductive approach, however, it did not posit *basso ostinato* as ‘real’, but rather set it up as a heuristic device to detect the transformation of theory. In practice, we will never be able to fully grasp this underlying pattern of thinking that literally makes ‘us’ into who we are, for it is in constant flux. For this reason, the community was conceptualised as a community of experience (chapter 3). In doing so, this thesis hoped to have shed light on the overlooked difference created by the spatial contextuality that helps us establish our subjectivity.

The unsynthesisable difference detected by *basso ostinato* paradoxically facilitated an intellectual globalisation that appears to be a synthesising phenomenon. To be sure, the dissemination of geopolitical knowledge has promoted the formation of an international society. The modern state is a template employed by many countries in the world to establish their political communities as a member of this international society. While what the concept of ‘the state’ signifies is rarely questioned, the way it is imagined as power must have been diverse, and such imaginations can, in turn, further transform the template of the state. The works of Japanese geopoliticians explicated in chapters 5 and 6 reveal how the concept was mutated significantly as it came to be imagined by the locals as a part of the familiar landscape. Such fluctuation in interpretation was however not noticed from Western perspectives, largely because, as Mannheim (1985: 22) argues, ‘[e]very concept represents a sort of taboo against other possible sources of meaning—simplifying the manifoldness of life in the sake of action’. Accordingly, what the concept means is seldom questioned.

In the late nineteenth century, Japan as a local political entity radically transformed itself to a European-style state in order to avoid colonisation. However, avoiding colonisation inevitably meant joining an international society based on the European model. In addition to this physical difference, Japanese people transformed foreign concepts into something that made sense for them, collectively envisaging how power worked in the global arena by relying on their own experiences. Thus, the European international world order expanded, not simply because non-Western people comprehended the concepts in ways that followed the European rule, but because traveling concepts inspired the formation of an assemblage of different imaginations.

Even though the respective constraints of each actor would force them to omit their difference with others, ‘the manifoldness of life’ Mannheim so aptly points out is irreducible when we survey the plurality of spaces. In this way, different people appropriate foreign knowledge for their own needs, thereby creating substantially new knowledges.

The imaginative theory of the state as a living organism was a patent visualisation of this practical variance of the concept of the state. The subtle inflections made to the theory become evident when it is projected as an image. As demonstrated in chapters 5 and 6, the continuous travel of this theory had rendered it polymorphous even before it arrived in Japan. There, the state was imagined in Japan as a limitlessly expanding organism permeable to all places and composed by different *minzoku*. As *minzoku* was a social construction for the Japanese, all Asians, and potentially all people in the world, would together comprise this state organism where the Japanese would become the leading race. This privileged position was occupied by the Japanese not because they were inherently superior, but because they believed they were destined to do so. In their imagination, Japan was endowed with a rare fortunate match between geography and people. Japanese people *became* superior because they had been living on a superior land by chance. The torch of human progress, which had been carried by Europeans to that date, was now to be passed to the Japanese. Therefore, *Daitōa Chiseigaku* was fundamentally and even violently inclusive, subjective, anti-scientific, but thoroughly idealistic. This visualisation became possible not only because Japan wanted to present an antithesis to the European worldview, but also because this inclusive mode of power was more intelligible to the people living in Japan in reference to their history and its half-isolated geography. Through the appropriation of theory, Japan, once willingly to join the Western international society, changed its identification back to that of the East (Asia) and fought against the idea known as the West. In this way, Japanese people found their own political subjectivity in foreign knowledge. The identification of subjectivity paradoxically and simultaneously subjected them to a traditional and regressive disciplinary strategy, instead of a foreign strategy implied in the (Western) knowledge.

Thus, geopolitics is not a homogenising theory, but one that generates diverging views of world politics. In the global dissemination of knowledge, dissimilitude is developed out of similitude and *vice versa*. An assemblage in the global socialisation of knowledge cannot be seen as a proof of the existence of consensus (cf. Friedrichs

and Kratochwil, 2009), but is better observed as a node without consent which contains an unsynthesisable realm. The unsynthesisable cognitive voids in travelling political theories, however, have supported the synthetic tendency of globalisation. Reality plays an important role here, not because different actors perceive the same reality, but precisely the opposite: that it is comprehended differently. As Mannheim (1985: 31) argues, an ostensibly rational reasoning is supported by an irrational foundation. The framework employed in this thesis aimed to clarify this relation. Because the irrational foundation is barely recognised, an apparently contingent migration of theory contains an apparent inevitability, but if the reason of the assimilation of theory is sought only either in rationality or irrationality and only from a particular standpoint, no sufficient explanation of the contingency and inevitability can be achieved.

This contingent but inevitable intersection, to some extent, is what Allen (2012: 191) refers to as an emergent ‘thingness’ (see chapter 2), which in his elaboration means ‘not relations per se ... but those that set themselves up as internal relations and, on that basis, claim prior knowledge of what the power of a particular object or entity can necessarily do’. This ‘thingness’ can be considered in relation to a conundrum of the state as a concept. Despite repeated calls for a ‘retreat of the state’ (Strange, 1996), the concept of the state is still powerful, and it was this very concept that appeared to have facilitated the expansion of the European international society. This thesis argues that the expansion was not because the concept of the state was novel in its right, but because, when spread and projected to other landscapes of the world, it was recognisable in each context and conjured up a familiar mode of power. Through cognitive voids, the ‘inside’ is linked to the ‘outside’, actualising the power of the state in a different way. Here, an apparent cause is more in interiority than in exteriority, although it is not ‘autonomous’. Rather, it is the apparent autonomous subjectivity *per se* that paradoxically renders the subject into a docile body for the sake of gaining a new knowledge. Nonetheless, the power that is being imagined differently apparently supports a macro representation in the global arena. Here, what connects the different imaginations are the different languages that comprehend the supposedly same concept in diverged ways, creating dissimilitude out of similitude. It is this difference that constitutes the superficial sameness that this thesis tried to identify. This leads to another question, the one that the concluding section of chapter 6 alluded to: In geographical concepts, do the function of unconscious consciousness

and the lack of consensus together indicate a stronger sense of thingness? The findings of this thesis gave a positive answer to this question by pointing out the materiality of geography. The thingness never works independently, and has to be embedded in a landscape in order to be actualised. A geographical concept that visualises a particular landscape is for this reason a blessed, creative traveller among numerous travelling theories.

Geography is ‘not a noun but a verb, a geo-graphing’ (Ó Tuathail, 1996b: 2); however, how to draw a map depends on the epistemic traditions to which people belong. Even if the maps look alike as final products, their production processes can be very different. Analysing geopolitical imaginations is important not just because they represents a hegemonic view, but because they can reveal how the superficial hegemonic projection actually comprises numerous different projections. The hegemony is not a stable one, but is rather precarious because of this clandestine manifoldness. The World politics is, in practice, imagined in numerous ways at different sites. These diverse imaginations are what supported the global voyage of political theories, whose trajectories are not uni-linear, but like a gigantic transactional web of ideas with multiple origins, incidentally linking up places, engendering numerous new interpretations of the theories. In this respect, theory should never be metaphorised as a single traveller, but a result of continuous conversations of both the conscious and the unconscious. The representation of the ‘Western’ traveller is seemingly evident not because it is consciously supported, but it essentially comprises a multiplicity of unconscious consciousness.

A profound puzzle in global intellectual history is whether the origin of a particular thought is identifiable. As this thesis has demonstrated, *Daitōa Chiseigaku* cannot be categorised as classical or critical, but only as Japanese. This fact reveals the important point that alternatives to dominant geopolitics must be conceived with a conscious inquiry of *whose* geopolitics. The same can be said with regard to relational thinking. In this thesis I drew on the current rise of assemblage thinking both in political geography and IR. It was not until my research was almost approaching the end that I realised the most salient tradition of thought in the society I was investigating was in fact a variance of relational thinking. This is evidenced by Nishida’s thought introduced in chapter 3. *Basso ostinato* is equally an assemblage concept, given that Maruyama’s concern was on the node where heterogeneous elements, both internal and external, meet in the space of the ‘inter’. However, again, it would be a mistake

to see Japan as more progressive than Europe in terms of political thought. On the contrary, as mentioned, Maruyama's concept was criticised as regressive in the 1980s. Also, the Kyoto School of philosophers led by Nishida had shown support to the Greater East Asia War. The Chinese IR scholar Yaqing Qin (2016), in his recent research, proposes 'a relational theory of world politics'. Arguing that 'culture matters', he outlines a 'value-added' theory based on Chinese Confucian tradition, in contrast to the 'individualistic rationality' as a 'defining element of the background knowledge of Western culture'. In this context, relational thinking can be considered a rather classic way of thinking in the history of Japan and China. Following him, I have considered the different perspectives complementary, rather than alternatives. At the same time, however, unlike Qin, I am hesitant to see a particular thought as the product of a particular culture. Rather, I want to consider it as the product of a particular context in order to conceive global intellectual history as a gigantic relational web.

As explained, Japan imported from China the Confucian tradition and consequently relational thought, both of which have eventually evolved into something different in Japan (see chapter 3). On the other hand, while this thesis posits that geopolitics travelled from Germany to Japan, German geopolitics had, as Spang (2001) argues, in fact already been influenced by Japanese thought given Haushofer's and the others' experiences with Japan. In the meantime, I did not have enough space to point out that Western thinkers were an essential source of inspiration for Nishida's theory. Maruyama, a specialist of Edo Confucianism, also relied heavily on German humanities. Likewise, the China-Japan relation has never been a one-way traffic, since some Chinese modern thinkers were influenced by modern Japanese thought as well (Jenco, 2015). It may be interesting to note as an aside that Robert Cox, who is influenced by Gambattista Vico, met a Japanese scholar who pointed out the affinity between his work and Nishida's (Cox, 2002: 27; see chapter 3). All these arguments and observations make the question on the origin of a thought obsolete; it is of no importance to discuss, for example, whether Deleuze and Guattari were influenced by Chinese ideas, or if Maruyama had read their works. Theories, thoughts, and ideas are always travelling all around the globe, weaving entangled and endless webs that are never one-way or unilateral. As seen in the example of realism discussed in chapter 2, these intellectual developments often appear on a temporal scale as a revisionist movement. On spatial terms, however, similar thoughts, like the examples of relational

thinking and geopolitics, can emerge in different places. However, the seemingly identical thoughts are never the same. Yet, the multiplicity also contains synchronic elements. Foucault, in his lecture in Japan in 1977, relies on Maruyama's work on Edo Confucianism and argues that the two political powers concurrently appearing in the West and the East were similar, but still different in form (Foucault, 1978b: 161). Foucault also points out that in contrast to the West's scientific approach to sex, 'the art of Eros' was instead developed in Eastern societies. He insists that what distinguishes Western society from Eastern society is the West's self-assertion of its scientificity and rationality (Foucault, 1978a: 118-119).

The case of Japanese geopolitics highlights this divergence well. For the Japanese, geopolitics was an art rather than science. Thus, a more nuanced difference can be detected in the ways of viewing the same event, making any -isms plural in practice. At the same time, however, it should be acknowledged that this difference is not eternal, but only ephemeral. Different ways of thinking are, as I have argued, composed of mundane elements, and give rise to distinct intellectual traditions that always evolve independently but still in relation to one another. A seemingly dominant way of thinking is in fact supported by a hidden premise. The various intellectual traditions incidentally and occasionally form similar ideas, as they experience sometimes identical, sometimes merely similar, events. The same event can be observed differently from different spaces. At the same time, those ways of observing are also undergoing changes as they are affected by experiences. Moreover, the landscapes in which the experiences are embedded are subject to changes in which humans are involved.

This global web of thought invites us to perceive difference in a fresh way. *Basso ostinato* indicates that difference is composed by numerous banal elements like how musical notes compose distinctive pieces of music. One's uniqueness is only a matter of order of the notes (Maruyama, 1976a); if the order is only slightly changed, or if one flat is added on the score, it will be listened as a different piece of music. Human practices create a variety of ideas and make use of these ideas in different contexts, and then these different contexts happen to generate apparently identical ideas in different times. However, the same idea can be understood in diverged ways in different spaces. Views that emerge from different spatio-temporal contexts can never be exactly the same, for no two contexts are identical. This then means that particularity can become something that connects, rather than distinguishes, people.

Bluntly put, within difference there contains sameness, and *vice versa*, as both are composed of banal, everyday elements. If then it is the absence of consensus that facilitates the dissemination of theory, and if difference is but an aggregation of banal elements, in what way is theory of use to us? Or simply: Do we still need a grand theory (Buzan and Little, 2001; Solomon and Steele, 2015)? My answer is yes, but only to identify, instead of sameness, the differences among us, which at this particular point in time seem to be shrinking and getting smaller.

Towards a New Research Agenda

These findings can give rise to the following practical research agenda: Would these entangled developments merge at some point? In other words, can the unsynthesisable cognitive void identified in this thesis become *synthesised* in the course of further globalisation? And in terms of geopolitics, will we have *the* modern geopolitical imagination in the end, as Agnew (2003) has insisted? Or have the geopolitical imaginations already turned into a synthesised imagination in the course of accelerated globalisation since the end of the Second World War? While in this thesis I have so far argued that the global dissemination of knowledge is fundamentally unsynthesisable, I have also mentioned that because *basso ostinato* is composed of mundane elements, it is susceptible to change. Even a community that has an exceptionally homogeneous population such as Japan cannot avoid globalisation. The secluded geography of Japan, which once nurtured the Japanese imagination that protected the residents from invasion, has come to be perceived differently. As human flow increases, experiences become more and more global. And as interactions between different humans intensify, theoretically speaking one's autonomy may be blurred if not totally disappear. This ambivalent conclusion, together with the historical fact that Japan literally became a member of the political West in the latter half of the last century, must then evoke the question whether the Japanese state followed Western geopolitical imaginations after its defeat in the Second World War. In order to set this question up as the next research agenda, let me briefly sketch the intellectual map in post-war Japan.

Geopolitics was completely abandoned in Japan after the Second World War. This forgetting in itself was not particularly a Japanese phenomenon, but in fact a worldwide one. What distinguished Japan's collective forgetting from the others was the accompanying eradication of geographical moniker *Daitōa* or *Tōa*. In addition, the

term *Nan-yō* (the South) also almost disappeared and was replaced by ‘scientific’ geographical terms like ‘Southeast Asia’ (Yano, 1975). In Japan, the war that started in Hawaii in 1941 was called the ‘*Daitōa Sensō*’ (Great East Asia War). However, right after the US occupation of Japan had begun, the nomenclature was replaced by the ‘Pacific War’, first used by a series of articles published in all major newspapers in Japan in 1945 as some sort of ‘official history’ written by the General Headquarters, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP).²⁴ This new appellation however has caused another controversy, as it tended to frame the war as one between Japan and the United States, conveniently excluding the entire Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937, or even the Malayan Campaign in 1941, which started one hour and twenty minutes earlier than the attack on Pearl Harbour. Since the end of the US occupation in 1951, various alternative names, such as the Fifteen Years War, the *Shōwa* War, the Asia-Pacific War, the Japanese-American War, the Japanese-American-English War, the Far Eastern War, and the Second World War, were proposed in search for a proper nomenclature (see for example, Thorne, 1986). Nevertheless, not even a slight change from ‘Pacific War’, such as ‘Asia-Pacific War’²⁵, has successfully replaced the evidently inadequate original label. It is not surprising that the forbidden appellation ‘*Daitōa* War’ has repeatedly made comebacks, on the grounds that the ‘Pacific War’ was an ‘imposed name’ by the vanquisher (Hayashi, 1964). Curiously, however, the name ‘Pacific War’ had already been proposed by the Imperial Navy in as early as 1941 (Shōji, 2011). On the surface, then, Japanese people, at least as a collective, seem to be happy to abandon the term. To date, the war has no official name except ‘the previous war’ (*saki no taisen*). What is the implication of this curious, collective forgetting?

The most convincing explanation is that if the name contains the term ‘Asia’, it would mean that Japan’s enemies included both Asians and Americans, which would contradict the American discourse. In fact, the ‘official history’ written by the SCAP did not depict any Asian country as their allies. To a certain extent, then, it can be said that Japan discursively followed the United States by abandoning its own geography. However, this judgment is a little simplistic, for as this thesis has demonstrated, Japan

²⁴ The series of articles ‘The History of the Pacific War’ was published as a book in 1946 under the same title (Civil Information and Educational Section, SCAP, 1946).

²⁵ Although this name is used frequently within academic circles, the ‘Pacific War’ is normally used in journalism and school textbooks in Japan.

regarded other Asians and even the West not as its enemy but as part of its organism, imagining the space of the globe as one world. The Japanese tried to lead the world because they believed that they were destined to do so. In this context, Japan's disarmament in the post-war security arrangement might not mean relegating its security to others or abandoning the power of the state. It is equally misleading to think of it as only a pragmatic choice in which the state prioritised economic growth (cf. Kōsaka, 2006; Pyle, 1996; Samuels, 2007). Rather, it may be argued that, based on the mode of power in Japan, the Japanese understood the disarmament as a natural outcome of the war: The defeat made them realise that it was (still) not them who were destined to rule the world, but the Americans would lead the world as one organism of which Japan was a part. In the end, power rested on geography for the Japanese, and was not someone's possession.

In the latter half of the century, modern Japan ultimately become part of the West, remarkably contributing to the Western-centric world order. The present thesis has not examined this final outcome. However, given the discussion of this thesis, it is possible to argue that the transformation of Japan's identity—or its historical wandering between the West and the East—is better considered as a continuation of its particular epistemic tradition, rather than as a radical breakup from the past as a result of the defeat in the war. Simply put, Japan entered the West in its own imagination. In this respect, *basso ostinato* changes ever so slowly unless it is brought into a conscious recollection. Given the outcome of the Second World War, *basso ostinato* contains the danger of becoming a source of apocalypse. At the same time, however, it is a source of subjectivity to acquire knowledge and therefore inspire action. Because of this subjectivity, Japan has radically and repeatedly changed its identification in world politics from being part of the West, then part of Asia, and part of the West again. As Linda Alcoff (2000: 319) relying on Foucault has insisted, 'the moment of subjectification—the moment at which we attain the status of subject—is simultaneously the moment of subjection. Only as subjects can we be made subject to the Law and subject to disciplinary strategies that produce docile bodies'. Here we see a contradictory double movement, in which Japan has been analysed as both a docile body *and* simultaneously an assertive subject in the Eurocentric world order. The most profound implication of *basso ostinato*, then, might be this: *Basso ostinato* is what hampers us from 'sound' knowing but does help us knowing creatively so as to ensure plurality of subjectivity and knowledge. It is what unwittingly constructs 'us', the 'us'

which is always in flux. Will the time come when polyphonic music is listened as monophonic, all differences between the melodies eradicated? If the answer is in the affirmative, what will happen to the plurality of global knowledge?

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